

Monasticism In Staffordshire.

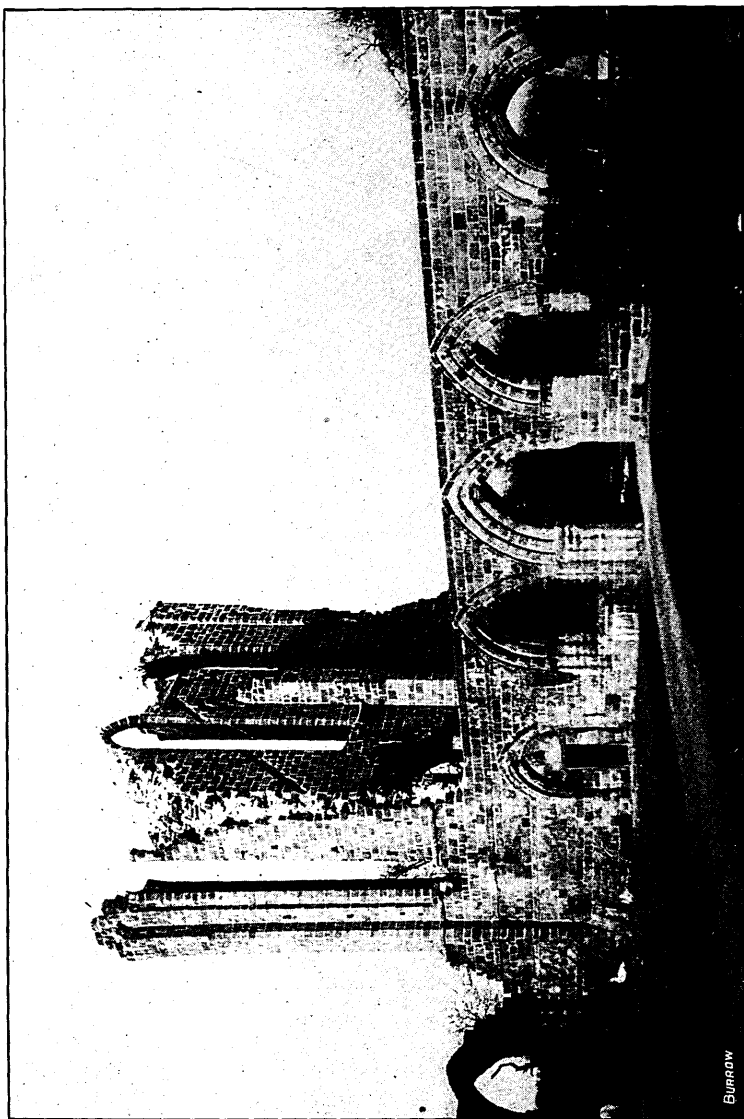
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CROXDEN ABBEY.

Monasticism in Staffordshire:

**the growth, influence, and
suppression of the religious
houses of Staffordshire:**

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PREFACE.

The following chapters in no way profess to be a *history* of the religious houses of Staffordshire. My aim is indicated by the title. I have tried to look, first, at the evidence which I have found, and then to read motives and draw deductions; and I have endeavoured to do this independently of the views and assertions of writers on the general subject of monasticism: this accounts for the very few references which will be found to such writers. Treated in this way, the growth and development of monasticism throws light on many side-issues—social, economical, and political, and I have tried to weigh the evidence entirely with regard to its local bearing. The development in Staffordshire has not always been the same as national development: the influence has been sometimes different. Local history does not always run parallel with national history, and this gives it, perhaps, its special interest. The story of the suppression, again, is told solely as it happened in Staffordshire: related in this way it gains in vividness and reality, and makes a much stronger appeal than a general outline can possibly do.

Many of my conclusions will inevitably be open to criticism. I may say, however, that, right or wrong, they are the result of a study of the evidence at first hand, and of a careful and independent weighing of it. Many of them, I own, are quite contrary to my own previous opinions, gathered from the usual authorities; and much of the story of the decline and degeneration of the religious houses has been to me a great disillusioning. Face to face with the accumulated evidence which I have given, one is driven to confess that the suppression of the monasteries was quite inevitable; the wonder is that they lasted as long as they did. But this conviction in no way palliates the method of suppression by Henry VIII. and Thomas Cromwell, and the story as told in the last two chapters almost restores the sympathy for the "religious" which preceding chapters had banished.

General references have been given in the Notes and Illustrations at the end, and I think I have given no "facts" for which I cannot quote "chapter and verse" of first-rate authority.

Of the local documents, some have been copied from the originals at the Public Record Office (see, especially, Appendix, and Notes to Chapter XIII.). Many others are found, abbreviated or in full, in the various volumes issued by the William Salt Archaeological Society, entitled *Collections for a History of Staffordshire*. The rules of the Society state that its "leading object" is "the editing and printing of original documents relating to the County of Stafford," and this aim has been splendidly fulfilled. The volumes have been absolutely invaluable. For instance

Vol. i.—Contains the Register of Bishop Roger de Norbury (1322-58).

Vol. iv., Pt. i.—The Chartulary of Ronton Priory.

Vol. v., Pt. i.—The Burton Chartulary.

Vol. vi., Pt. i.—The Stowe Chartulary.

Vol. vi., Pt. ii.—List of the Capitular Muniments at Lichfield.

Vol. viii., Pt. i.—Chartulary of St. Thomas the Martyr, Stafford.

Vol. xi.—Chartulary of Trentham.

New Series, Vol. viii.—2nd Register of Bp. Robert de Stretton, 1360-85.

„ Vol. ix.—Dieulacres Chartulary.

„ Vol. x.—1st Register of Bp. Stretton, 1358-85.

Besides these volumes, the series gives the local matter relating to Staffordshire extracted from the Pipe Rolls, the Plea Rolls, the Hundred Rolls, the Pleas of the Forest, the Assize Rolls, the De Banco Rolls, *Pedes Finium*, the Early Chancery Proceedings, etc., in all cases directly from the originals in the Public Record Office, so that the work of the historian has been immensely simplified. Other original matter of very great value is the Staffordshire Chartulary of Ancient Deeds, printed with notes by the Rev. R. W. Eyton and Major-Genl. the Hon. G. Wrottesley, in vols. ii. (pt. i.) and iii.; indeed, there is hardly a volume which has not supplied much information, and as it is practically all "original"

matter the series forms an ideal apparatus for the student.

The Burton Chartulary, as given in vol. v., pt. i., is mainly confined to the Staffordshire lands: it has been supplemented by further extracts given in the *Journal of the Derbyshire Archæological and Natural History Society*, vol. vii. (January, 1885). Similarly, vol. vi., pt. ii., may be supplemented by the Fourteenth Report (Appendix, pt. viii.) of the Historical MSS. Commission (1895).

Eyton's *Domesday Studies: an Analysis and Digest of the Staffordshire Survey*, Beresford's *Lichfield* (Diocesan Histories, S.P.C.K.), and Sleight's *Leek* have also supplied detail of various kinds.

The *Annales de Burton* are printed in *Annales Monastici*, vol. i. (1864), edited by H. R. Luard, M.A., and many volumes of the *Calendars* of State documents have supplied much material and guidance, especially the *Letters and Papers of the reign of Henry VIII.* Some extracts have been made from Wright's *Letters relating to the Suppression of Monasteries* (Camden Society, 1843) and Sir Henry Ellis's *Original Letters*.

Among "general" books which have supplied certain facts, the following may be mentioned. They are placed in alphabetical order:—

Adams: *History of England, 1066-1216* (in "The Political History of England.")

Ashley: *Introduction to English Economic History and Theory*, vol. i., 1888; vol. ii., 1893.

Burnet: *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England* (4 vols., 1839).

Cunningham: *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, vol. i., 1896.

Fisher: *History of England, 1485-1547* (in "The Political History of England.")

Freeman: *The History of the Norman Conquest of England* (vols. i. and ii., 3rd edition; vols. iii. and iv., 2nd edition; vol. v., 1876).

Gairdner: *Lollardy and the Reformation in England* (2 vols.), 1908.

Gasquet: *Henry III. and the Church*, 1905.

„ *English Monastic Life* ("The Antiquary's Books").

Gasquet: *Parish Life in Mediæval England* ("The Antiquary's Books").

Merriman: *Life and Letters of Thomas Cromwell* (2 vols., 1902).

Spelman: *The History and Fate of Sacrilege* (Catholic Standard Library, 1888).

Strype: *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (6 vols., Oxford, 1822).

Stubbs: *The Constitutional History of England* (4th edition).

„ *Registrum Sacrum Anglicanum*, 1858 (Episcopal Succession in England).

„ *Select Charters* (5th edition).

Wylie: *History of England under Henry the Fourth* (4 vols.).

My pages have been saved from some mistakes by the help of the Rev. F. J. Wrottesley, M.A., Vicar of Denstone, to whom I am deeply grateful for his varied kindnesses, though he should not be held responsible for errors of fact or deduction. I owe many thanks, too, to the Editor of *The Staffordshire Advertiser*, who printed much of the following in his column. My friend and colleague Mr. F. Darwin Swift has been good enough to read the last proofs.

F. A. HIBBERT.

Denstone College.

MONASTICISM IN STAFFORDSHIRE.

CHAPTER I.

PRE-NORMAN FOUNDATIONS.

It is not till half-a-century before the Norman Conquest that the real story of the Staffordshire monasteries, in the ordinary sense of the word, begins. There were religious houses founded before that date, but they were different in essential features from the later, and the latter have usually no historical connection with the former. But for the sake mainly of completeness, it will be necessary to begin with these earliest foundations.

When Wulfere became King of Mercia in the year 659 he found the kingdom wanting both in unity and civilization. Its deficiency in these respects had in itself effectually retarded its political progress. King Wulfere's best work would be to remedy what was lacking.

The Christian Church was at once a bond of union and a powerful instrument of civilization. Political interests, therefore, as well as personal conviction, made Wulfere a strenuous supporter of the Christian missionaries. They had been already within the borders of Mercia, but now they were systematically encouraged and supported. St. Wilfrid was invited and lands were given him. Wulfere desired to retain him as Bishop. It was not to be: instead, he received in 668 his meek rival St. Chad.

It would be strange, in an age when local feeling was all-powerful and national feeling non-existent, thus to find Wulfere inviting one, and his people and himself accepting another Northumbrian as Bishop, did we not remember that the Church knew no limits of race or country, much less of kingdoms. The establishment of the Northumbrian Chad as Bishop of the Mercians was at once an illustration of the power of the Catholic Church to weld and unite diverse peoples, and an important step towards the accomplishing of such a work. It helped to lay the foundation of a national Church, overspreading local divisions, and never forgetting its corporate unity, upon which national union was gradually built.

In supporting and extending Christianity, Wulfere was supporting Monasticism. The work of evangelization was done wholly by monks—i.e., men who lived a common life and, more or less, according to a common rule: this, again, was a uniting force.

The monks lived in communities, often of men and women, and also of children to be taught. From these houses they made their missionary journey

up and down the country, which was as yet too poor and too sparsely populated to maintain anything like parish clergy, returning ever and anon to the common home for rest and recuperation.

Even before St. Chad came to Lichfield, Wulfere appears to have founded a monastery there. The new Bishop built a humble house east of the present Cathedral, and there he lodged with his monks when not engaged in missionary work. Early in 672 most of his brethren were carried off by the plague, and only one was near the Bishop when the angel voices were heard calling him also to his rest.

At Stone was another monastery founded by Wulfere. It was built, according to tradition, like the greater house Wulfere helped to establish at Peterborough, in expiation of the crime he had committed in earlier and heathen days by slaying his two sons for the faith they had adopted. His gentle wife, Ermenilda, is said to have founded a nunnery also at Stone, and his daughter, St. Werburgh, nunneries at Trentham and Hanbury. Now or later St. Modwen had a religious house at Burton-on-Trent.

Throughout these early years, if not, indeed, throughout the Middle Ages, every man who desired to bring civilization to his people acted as Wulfere had done. He found the monks the best agents for accomplishing his aims. Again and again we shall have illustrations of the work which the monks did in Staffordshire in bringing order, discipline, culture, and civilization. The political value of Wulfere's work is seen in the important part played by Mercia in subsequent history. Once, indeed, for sixteen years, its Bishop, with his seat at Lichfield, ranked as Archbishop with the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

The wild and heathen Danes, whose misdeeds fill so large a part in the history of the ninth century, wrought terrible havoc on the monasteries. All of them which lay in their way were destroyed. The house or houses at Stone were abandoned. St. Werburgh's foundations were wrecked, though the nuns escaped to Chester, carrying her body with them.

The converse of the previous experience was now witnessed. The encouragement of monasteries had meant progress and order; the disappearance of the monasteries meant the dissolution of order and the checking of civilization, for schools perished with the monasteries.

In Mercia it was the Lady Ethelfleda, daughter of the great Alfred, who made effective opposition to the Danes. She rallied the inhabitants round her and struck blow after blow. Her plan along the Danish border, which ran through Staffordshire, was to fortify certain places strongly, and from them to hold the surrounding district. Stafford. Tamworth,

and Wednesbury in Staffordshire were fortified in this way and for this purpose. Tamworth was her favourite residence.

As the position of the English was strengthened in this way, the old state of things, or something like it, in religious matters was restored. The Church had clung as best it could to the territory it had occupied. Bishops had held to their posts. The Cathedral survived the storm, and new centres of religious work were planted in positions of vantage in very much the same way as the centres of military influence had been chosen. Bodies of clergy, living together semi-monastically according to rule, and hence termed Canons, are found at Stafford, Gnosall, Penkridge, Wolverhampton, and Tettenhall. From these centres they worked the surrounding districts, and gradually the country was won back to religion and civilization. The Lady Wulfrun, a member of the Royal Family, in the year 994, intended to found a monastery at Wolverhampton, but her design was not carried out. Part of the estates she had designated for the purpose went, however, to found a collegiate church.

It is not to be supposed that the progress of the Church and of civilization was always unchecked even by those who profited by it. At the end of the tenth century there was a distinct reaction against monasticism, and its leader was Alfhære, the Mercian Ealdorman. The monks were dispossessed of some of their churches, and married clergy with their "wives" substituted. Former owners of lands which had come into monastic occupation laid claim to them as having been obtained illegally. Social and political, as well as ecclesiastical, motives may have prompted the movement, but renewed incursions by the Danes quickly ended it. Side by side with political and military energy there came a fresh revival of monasticism, and this time it was of a stricter type. Benedictine houses of the new type began to be founded, where the monks lived under definite rule and firm discipline, and the canons of the collegiate churches were either supplanted by Benedictine monks or at least brought under regular rules. Vigorous protest was made against the marriage of priests.

The result was a renewal both of spiritual improvement and of effective opposition to the invaders. The way in which the two went hand in hand is well shown in the case of Wulfric Spot.

He was one of the few heroic figures of the time. None excelled him in piety, none either in patriotism and valour. The house built by St. Modwen at Burton-on-Trent had disappeared, probably in consequence of the Danes, and Wulfric recognized the value of the position, situated as it was on the great road to York, and ever since Roman times a place of importance. Wulfric was a man who knew the power

of social agencies. He supported the guild at Tamworth, and while others stooped to unworthy measures, as futile as they were wrong, like the "Massacre of St. Brice" (1002), which is said to have begun at Marchington, Wulfric rose to higher efforts. In the very year of that treacherous deed he founded on his own domains the Abbey of St. Modwen at Burton, liberally endowing it with lands and bestowing on it ample means for carrying on its beneficial work. In his will no less than 72 manors are mentioned. Two years later King Ethelred the Redeless gave a charter confirming the foundation. The earliest monks came from Winchester, with the first Abbot, who bore the English name of Wulfeat, and lived till the year 1026. With the foundation of the Benedictine Abbey at Burton the real history of monasticism in Staffordshire begins. When we are able to estimate its influence we shall see the debt which the county owes to Burton Abbey. Around it the town of Burton grew up. Kings and prelates lodged within its walls. It played its part in national history more than once.

In spite of subsequent ingratitude on the part of the King, its founder exemplified the extent to which a common Christianity gave a bond of union to men who had little else to link them together.

The massacre of St. Brice's day was a blunder as well as a crime. It made the Danish invasions more systematic and determined. Exeter and the West in 1003, Salisbury and Hampshire later, Norwich and East Anglia in 1004, the Valley of the Thames in the winter of 1006-7, the Southern coast in 1009, were all ravaged in a series of ruthless campaigns of vengeance. In 1010 the Danish fleet again appeared off East Anglia and landed near Ipswich. But here a great force awaited them. Among the patriots who collected there was Wulfric Spot, coming from his distant lands in Staffordshire to fight in defence not of his own lands or of his own locality, but of his native country. Such an example of patriotism, rising superior to the mere local spirit which actuated most men in those days, and which kept so many other Staffordshire men away, stamps Wulfric as one of those greater souls who rise superior to the limitations of their age, and shows him to have been a man of no common type. He fell in the battle of Ringmere, for the English were ruined by treachery, as King Oswald had fallen long before, *dimicans pro patria*. He was buried within his own Abbey cloister, near his wife Ealhswith.

The early history of Burton Abbey throws strong light on the character of Edward the Confessor, and shows how his favours were given, not for patriotic or religious reasons, but merely from personal motives, and how much these could outweigh the former. He gave the Abbey of Burton, with, also, Crowland, Coventry, and Thorney, to Leofric Abbot

of Peterborough. The explanation of such flagrant plurality is that Abbot Leofric was nephew of Leofric Eardorman of Mercia, who stood high in the King's favour. But it is to be recorded of Abbot Leofric that he fought on the English side at Senlac, and atoned by a patriot's valour for his breaches of Church order.

One other Benedictine house was founded in Staffordshire before the Norman Conquest. Burchard, the third son of Algar, whose other sons were the traitors Edwin and Morcar, accompanied Aldred, Archbishop of York, on his mission to Rome to fetch the pallium and to obtain for the King papal authorization for the privileges of Westminster Abbey. While returning through France, Burchard fell ill at Rheims and was buried within the precincts of the Abbey of St. Remigius there. The Abbey had been famous for a century for its good discipline. To the rules of St. Benedict it added the institutes of St. Augustine. In return for the kindness shown his son during his last hours, and for the burial place given to his body, as well as doubtless in admiration of the good lives of its monks, Earl Algar gave to the Abbey the "villa" of Lapley out of his Staffordshire possessions. At Lapley, accordingly, there was built a priory as a cell to St. Remigius. In Domesday Book the Abbot of Rheims is noted as the owner of four manors in Staffordshire, viz., Meaford, Ridware, and Marston, besides Lapley.

Although we have thus seen the two earliest Benedictine foundations established in Staffordshire, the true era of historical monasticism in the county has not yet come. The history may be said to have begun, but the foundations of Burton and Lapley were only forerunners, separated by a long interval from the next instances. For a long while the story progresses slowly, and there are wide gaps of time between each separate foundation. It is only when law and order begin to be established, and when civilization and agriculture become possible, that the religious houses appear in any number.

CHAPTER II. THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

Domesday Book (1086) is, of course, a mine of valuable information as to the material and social condition of Staffordshire in the reign of William I. It also enables us to form an idea as to the effect which the Norman Conquest had on the county. Further, it introduces us to the great families on whose domains and by whose endowment and policy the monastic establishments were afterwards founded.

The bald facts set down by William's officials are eloquent of desolation and poverty. Vast tracts in the county were treeless wastes and barren moorlands, unafforested and profitless.

In all parts of the county the Commissioners had to report "*terræ vastæ*,"—uninhabited estates. This was the case even close to the Bishop's great manor at Lichfield. Even of the arable land much was without ploughs to work it, and in all the county there were only 64 mills, and some of these were of trifling value. Staffordshire was, in the eleventh century, the poorest of the Midland Counties. The backward state of the county was not favourable to the foundation of houses of the Benedictine type, and an order devoting itself to agriculture had not yet arisen. The main cause of this unhappy state of affairs was the terrible revolt which had broken out in the county in the year 1069. It had been so dangerous that the Conqueror himself had been compelled to hasten thither, and he found anarchy and faction, and the dissolution of all order, alike civil and religious. His punishment was swift and terrible. The lands on all sides were devastated, and confiscations on a vast scale were carried out. The possessions of Edwin the Great Mercian Earl were of course escheated. The nuns of Stone, according to tradition, were murdered, perhaps in consequence of impolitic sympathy with the rebels which a house strong in the traditions of national royalty would be likely to feel. The people everywhere fled like hunted animals.

But beyond the doubtful case of Stone, in which even the story which relates it implies that it was irregular and lawless rather than part of a definite policy, there was no wilful destruction of houses or property. The rebellion crushed and the rebels smitten into submission or driven into flight, William took care that order and civilization should have free scope and every assistance.

The history of the monastic foundations and of the collegiate churches throws strong light on William's policy. In Domesday Book the Abbey of Burton held 6,500 acres, including the town and

most of the surrounding district, though it had lost more than half of the 72 manors named in Wulfic's will. Seven manors were given to it by William I. William valued the monks as agents of civilization and progress, but he usually deprived them of the exemption they had previously enjoyed in respect to military service. The monks of Burton surrendered half of their possessions on the condition that they held the remainder free from feudal obligations. The connection of the Abbey at Burton with the townspeople and of the Priory at Lapley with the family of its founder were evidently additional inducements to William to interfere with them as little as possible. He was desirous not to offend the susceptibilities of his new subjects. On the other hand, when the community at Stone was dissolved, by violence and murder, he took no steps to repair the wrong.

The monks could be trusted to be sufficiently amenable, but the Canons, like the Bishop and the parish clergy, had to be brought definitely and unmistakably under his own control. The new Norman Bishop moved his seat from the old English village of Lichfield, where he exercised independent and unchallenged authority, to Chester, where the new Palatine Earl held Court. The Conquest brought no fresh territories to the Bishop, but rather diminished his former possessions.

William's policy of bringing the clergy under his hand is seen equally clearly in his action as regards the collegiate churches. These, rich in memories of Ethelfleda and Wulfrun, were placed unmistakably under royal control.

His chaplain, Sampson, who figures in the Bayeux Tapestry, was made head of the College at Wolverhampton. Moreover, the Canons of Wolverhampton held such possessions as they were allowed to retain as tenants under Sampson, and the priests of Tetterhall held theirs in the same way. Sampson, though a Royal Chaplain and Canon of Bayeux, was as yet only in Deacon's orders, and in giving him such extensive power in Staffordshire William was, of course, effectively securing the collegiate churches as "Royal free chapels"—free, that is, from Episcopal control, but for that very reason the more dependent on the King and amenable to his influence.

Sampson was not ordained priest till 1096, when William Rufus made him Bishop of Worcester. Henry I. allowed him to transfer Wolverhampton to the See of Worcester. In Domesday Stafford is noted as having 13 prebendaries, each having a house, with a "provost" who has two. "Nine clerks" held Gnosall and Penkridge, free from the authority of Sampson.

The power given to Sampson also illustrates the way in which ecclesiastical preferments were looked upon as a convenient means by which those

who had been useful to the Crown might be rewarded without expense. The abuse was one full of possibilities, which were developed later. Early in our history we shall see how King John used his Royal Chapel at Penkridge as an easy means of partly repaying a debt to the Archbishop of Dublin; and, later, Henry IV. made Lawrence Allerthorne, one of the Barons of the Exchequer and for a short period at the beginning of the reign treasurer, Dean both of Stafford and Wolverhampton. He was also Prebendary of Hereford, and held other benefices besides. At Wolverhampton he left grave dilapidations for his successor. He was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral with a plenary indulgence in his tomb from Pope Boniface IX.

Besides illustrating William the Conqueror's policy as regards the monasteries and the collegiate churches, Domesday Book introduces us to many of the families which will figure later in the history of Monasticism in Staffordshire.

By wholesale confiscations of English lands, on various pretexts which Norman lawyers easily made legal, William's followers were rewarded and a new nobility endowed. The whole process has been well compared to the method by which the lands of the monasteries were transferred five centuries later to the Tudor nobles. The forfeited estates of Earl Edwin were largely retained by the King himself, but many were used also to reward his Norman followers. Much went to build up the great Palatine Earldom of Chester. Henry de Ferrars also profited largely. He came of lawless ancestry, but having fought at Senlac and helped in the subjugation of England, he was rewarded with large estates in various parts of England. At the date of the compilation of Domesday Book he had obtained possession of Tutbury and had probably begun to build his castle there. He was one of the Domesday Commissioners, though not for the county of Stafford. The Castle of Chartley came into possession of the Ferrars in 1231, on the death of Ralf Earl of Chester, whose sister was the wife of William de Ferrars. The greatest landowner, next after the Bishop, was Robert of Stafford, a scion of the great Norman house of De Toeni. He was brother of Nigel de Stafford, from whom the Gresleys descended. Another great acquisitionist was Henry de Audley. Hugh of Avranches, Earl of Chester, had been obliged to surrender his Staffordshire estates when given the Palatine Earldom, but old associations remained strong, and it was a constant aim of the family to re-establish its Staffordshire connection. The Noels also obtained lands in the county at the Norman Conquest.

The history of the extension of the various orders of monks in Staffordshire, in which the descendants of all these, with others, took part, brings out very

clearly the varying motives which prompted the foundation of the monasteries.

It will be the first aim in the following sketch to trace out the development of these motives and to see the causes of the various monastic foundations.

The Norman Knights, like William himself, were, as a rule, generous rewarders of the Norman monks, to whose prayers and blessings they attributed no small share of the success which attended their "crusade." Besides gifts from the spoils won in conquered England, they often gave lands from their new estates to the foreign monasteries, upon which dependent houses were founded. In Staffordshire there is but one instance of this, the Priory which Henry de Ferrars established near his Castle at Tutbury as a dependent of the great Norman house of St. Peter sur Dive. When Abbot Nigel, of Burton (1094-1113) enfeoffed Orm in the manor of Okeover, it was done in full chapter and in the presence of Richard, the Abbot of St. Peter's, Orm being also a tenant under the Prior of Tutbury. The Norman Abbey had been one of the earliest recipients of the Conqueror's bounty, and though Domesday Book includes it among the holders of English lands elsewhere in England it does not mention it in Staffordshire. The date usually given for Henry de Ferrars' foundation of Tutbury is 1080, six years before the Great Survey. It appears, therefore, either that this date is wrong or that the dependence of Tutbury on St. Peter sur Dive was unconnected with land tenure. Probably the backward and uncultivated condition of the lands in Staffordshire made them in general not worth giving. At any rate the true era of monastic foundations in the county did not begin till fifty years later, and then the motives were less often those of generosity than of mere utilitarianism.

The foundation of a religious house at Trentham in the reign of William II. appears to have been merely part of the territorial policy of Hugh Earl of Chester. He was one of the few barons who were loyal to their King in the great rebellion of 1088. Though he held a position of great importance and had estates of wide extent, in Staffordshire his pre-eminence had been destroyed when the Palatine Earldom had been erected. For many years a constant effort was being made by the Earls of Chester to re-establish this pre-eminence, and the foundation of Trentham, on what in Domesday Book was a Royal demesne, was only a move in the game.

CHAPTER III.

THE AUGUSTINIANS AND CLUNIACS.

It was conjectured that the poverty and backward condition of the greater part of the county accounted for the foundation of Tutbury being the only instance of the gratitude of the Conqueror's followers in Staffordshire. But as years went by we see the new owners beginning to feel their position secure ; and as something like stability and order is restored they are able to turn their attention to development of their estates. The foundation of monasteries then begins. Hugh Malvesin's foundation of a Benedictine nunnery at Blithbury, which was afterwards united with the nunnery of Blackladies at Brewood, proved to be the beginning of a long list of monastic houses which will claim our consideration.

It came in the reign of Henry I. and points to a period of settlement and organization. Another feature of the time indicates the same thing.

New families began to arise, like the Clintons, the Bassets, and the Verduns. These became important through the development of the machinery of government, which produced a professional class of justices, sheriffs, and barons of the Exchequer. At first the older baronage naturally regarded them as upstarts, but they gradually made their position secure by administrative ability and skill, promoting their own interests at the same time as the King's. Geoffrey de Clinton was chamberlain and justice to Henry I. His numerous legal offices enabled him to obtain possession of many petty escheats and so to build up a position and estate. In this way he obtained lands in Staffordshire, and his daughter married Norman de Verdun, who came of an older stock. It may have been by this marriage that the Verduns gained their first footing in the county, and the influence of the Clinton connection is clearly seen in their later relation to monastic development. Though the new families were as a rule scarcely rich enough yet to found monasteries themselves, though Clinton founded Kenilworth, they appreciated the social value of such institutions, and it was by the influence of Geoffrey de Clinton that Robert de Stafford re-founded the house at Stone about the year 1130. He had long been engaged in building up and consolidating an estate in the district, and his foundation of the priory was part of his larger scheme. Stone remained a cell to Kenilworth for a century and a half, though it chafed at its dependence and made attempts at freedom. In 1260 the Bishop of the Diocese intervened in the dispute and tried to settle matters, but in 1292 Stone became

independent, continuing, however, to pay a yearly sum to Kenilworth in formal acknowledgement of the latter's superiority.

Ralf Basset was another of these "new men." Both he and his son Richard were Royal justices in the reign of Henry I. The father presided at the famous sessions in Leicestershire when the reality of Henry's new rule of order was enforced by the hanging of 44 thieves. The son married Matilda Ridal, daughter of Justice Geoffrey Ridal. The Bassets founded a great legal family in Staffordshire, and Matilda's mother, some twenty years after her husband had perished in the disaster to the White Ship, founded the Cluniac Priory at Canwell A.D. 1142, between Lichfield and Coleshill. It received many benefactions from her heirs the Bassets.

In the reign of Stephen the weakness of the Royal authority gave opportunity to the feudal lords of re-asserting their power, and, often, of showing themselves in their true colours. Stephen tried to bind them to himself by privileges and honours. Robert de Ferrars, who led his men to the battle of the Standard, was made Earl of Derby. Ralf Earl of Chester, son of Ralf Meschin, the cousin of Earl Richard, whose death on the White Ship had ended the male line of Hugh of Avranches, aimed only at carving out of the general confusion a great estate for himself. Both he and Robert de Ferrars witnessed Stephen's second Charter issued in the first year of his reign.

Fierce, reckless, and selfishly ambitious, neither loyalty to the King, nor relationship to the Empress Matilda, whose niece he had married, could keep Earl Ralf constant to either side. Each side was anxious to secure the support of the great palatine Earl, with his enormous wealth, ancient prestige, and almost Royal power. He used his opportunity in the most cynical manner. By selling his services on more occasions than one, to each side, he obtained with each act of treachery a fresh accession of territory and greater increase of power.

In the early years of the reign he helped to capture the King at Lincoln, and while he was, for the time, on Matilda's side, he allowed her (1139) to nominate the Prior of his house at Trentham, showing how the party felt the need of securing the clergy on their side. The Prior is declared to be appointed *tam largitione quam presentacione venerabilis Domine nostre Matilde*. The treaty of Devizes in 1153 seemed to set the seal to his ambition, for he then received the county and earldom of Stafford. But directly afterwards he died, poisoned, it was said, by Peverel of the Peak, one of the many whose lands he had unjustly obtained. On his deathbed he gave the Priory of Trentham 100 solidates of Trentham Manor, and when Henry II. resumed possession of the manor he left the canons undisturbed and even added to their endowments. In

the train of Earl Ralf appears the name of Bertram de Verdun, and had the arrangement made at Devizes held good the Verduns would have sunk from the position of tenants-in-chief to that of dependents of the Earls of Chester. Earl Ralf's death, however, voided the contract.

Such arbitrary increase of baronial power as Earl Ralf had obtained was at once a sign and a cause of the disorder which marked the reign of Stephen. In the general breakdown of law and order the clerical estate, as well as the baronial, won extensions of powers and privileges which were afterwards to prove sources of trouble and difficulty. Bishop Roger de Clinton obtained from the weak King the grant of the collegiate churches of Stafford, Gnosall, Penkridge, and Wolverhampton. The Popes, more than ever, began to interfere in English affairs. Innocent II. (in 1139) and Lucius II. (1144) confirmed the King's grant to Bishop Roger.

Another and better effect of the times was seen. While ambitious men were struggling for selfish ends and spreading misery and desolation, better men devoted themselves to striving to provide refuges from the general misery and agencies for spiritual improvement. Bishop Roger de Clinton fortified the Cathedral Close in defence of the canons, but did not forget to provide for the spiritual needs of the townspeople in case they should be shut out by the closing of the gates. He built the Austin Priory of St. John, and not far away he founded a Benedictine nunnery at Fairwell. At Radmore, in Cannock Chase, a company of refugees established themselves for a while. At Canwell, as has been mentioned, Geva Ridal, daughter of Earl Hugh d'Avranches, built a Cluniac house in 1142. The Austin Priory at Rocester was founded in 1146 by Richard Bacon, nephew of the Earl of Chester, and the hermitage at Calwich was given to the Priory at Kenilworth by Nicholas de Gresley Fitz Nigel, and came under the definite rules of the Austin Canons, as also did the house at Trentham.

These last-mentioned houses represented another class of monks, differing from the Benedictines in many ways. The Benedictines might be laymen, but the Augustinians were priests. They were clergy living in community.

The secular canons of St. Augustine formed the staff of some of the Cathedrals, such as Lichfield, and of the collegiate churches. The history of the Cathedral body is not included in the present sketch, and that of the collegiate churches is only noticed incidentally.

The regular canons of St. Augustine represented an attempt at reform by the method of compromise. It was an effort to bring the monks into closer touch with the world. They lived in modified seclusion, according to the least severe and the most elastic

of the monastic rules. It will be seen from the account of the Austin Canons in Staffordshire that their relation with the parish churches was close. The nave of the church in an Austin Priory was usually parochial, and the order became very widespread. In Staffordshire there were eventually seven houses of the Augustinians.

The origin of the Priory of Trentham illustrates the nature of the Austin Priories very well. Hugh Earl of Chester had obtained from William II. the Royal manor at Trentham, and had built a religious house there, which had become decayed by the reign of Stephen. It was then restored or re-founded ("*ad restaurandum quandam abbatiam*" are the words of his grant) by Earl Ralf II. on his deathbed, and the Vicar of the Parish Church, John, the Earl's chaplain, became the prior of the house. For some years it looks as though there were but two canons, for "John Prior of Trentham and Orm his canon," "John Prior of Trentham and Samson his canon" are found attesting the Earl's deeds. For 30 years the Earl's endowment was paid only to Prior John, who continues to be called his chaplain; but in 1195 it was transferred to "the Canons." In 1307 the community consisted of a Prior and seven canons.

The composite parish of Stone, which was founded out of the various manors which existed there at the time of Domesday Book, probably came into being when Robert de Stafford founded the Priory which absorbed the church. In the reign of Henry III. there was a strife between the parishioners of the Priory about the payment of tithes, and it was formally arranged that all parishioners, freemen and villeins alike, should pay the definite sum of two farthings a year, with "oblations" four times yearly. In the time of Bishop Norbury (1322-59) there was such doubt at Rocester as to the proper place at which the parishioners were to make their Easter communions, in the Church or in the Priory, that an appeal had to be made to the Bishop, and he left the matter optional. When the Ronton Canons made a grant of a candle at the Feast of the Purification it was with the proviso "*exceptis omnibus parochianis dictorum Prioris et Conventus.*"

When the Bishop cited to his visitation the churchwardens and sidesmen of the churches which were served by Austin Priories he wrote to the Convents. It was the practice at Rocester for the senior canon next after the Prior to hold the vicarage, which he vacated when he was elected, as he often was, to the office of Prior. The canon-vicar was removable at the will of the Prior.

The Canons were often keen men of business. When a man was admitted to the Priory he often made a gift to the house: sometimes his father gave a piece of land "*pro anima filii mei*

qui apud eos religionis habitus suscepit.'' In the 13th century Giles de Erdington obtained for himself and his heirs the right of nominating a canon to St. Thomas, Stafford, showing another method of obtaining endowments. At the end of the 13th century Rocester was very wealthy through its extensive sheep farms. It was one of the regular clients of the foreign wool merchants.

It has already been mentioned that the reign of Stephen also saw the foundation of the first Cluniac House in Staffordshire—the Priory of Canwell.

The Cluniac Order was the first revision of the Benedictine Rule. It originated at the Abbey of Clugny in Burgundy in the year 927. Its object was to bring reform, but the abolition of the obligation of manual labour, which formed so excellent a feature in the original Benedictine system, merely increased opportunities for idleness, and the substitution of control by the parent house at Clugny for the supervision of the Bishop, though excellent in intention, proved detrimental to discipline. The Cluniac Monks became the least strict of the Monastic orders.

The reign of Henry II. again brought conditions favourable to monastic development. The recent foundations at Fairwell and Rocester were confirmed. An Austin Priory was founded at Ronton, probably in the early years of the reign, by Robert Fitz Noel, a descendant of one of the Normans who had obtained a great estate in Staffordshire on easy terms through his marriage to the daughter of Bishop Robert de Limesey (1086-1117). It was a cell to Haughmond in Shropshire, to which it paid 100 shillings yearly. The Canons of Ronton had the right of participating in the elections of the Priors of Haughmond, and the Prior of Haughmond was supposed to visit Ronton once every year. It had an almshouse attached to it dedicated to St. Anne.

The Austin Priory at Stafford had an interesting origin. Richard de Peche, Bishop of the diocese, was one of the friends of Becket. He had taken part in his consecration, and soon after his murder Richard dedicated a Priory at Stafford to the memory of St. Thomas the Martyr, on land given by a wealthy burgess named Gerard. When he felt his own end approaching he resigned his bishopric and retired to the Priory, where shortly after he died and was buried before the High Altar (1182).

Another Cluniac house was built in this reign at Dudley. It was in Staffordshire then, though its site is in Worcestershire now. It was founded by Gervase Paganel, Baron of Dudley, in 1161, and was a dependent church of Wenlock, one of the greatest of the Cluniac houses in England. Its charter relates that its founder was fulfilling his father's intention in establishing the house.

CHAPTER IV. THE CISTERCIANS.

Throughout the reign of Henry II. the supremacy of the old feudal baronage was being undermined by the steady pressure of the Royal power and the quiet organization of the administration by the new officials. Hugh Earl of Chester and William Earl Ferrars, as well as the Bishop of the Diocese, were members of Henry II.'s Great Council: they took part, for instance, in the deliberations which resulted in the famous Constitutions of Clarendon (1164). The Earls could heartily support the King when his action, as in this case, was in diminution of clerical exemptions and privileges. They chafed when the same policy was directed against their own position. But it was steadily pursued; and gradually the feudal barons realized that their old pre-eminence was gone. They made a great and as it proved a final effort to recover their influence in 1173. In that widespread and well-organized revolt, Earl Hugh was a ringleader, and Earl Ferrars also joined. The former organized a rising in Brittany, but was surrounded and captured at Dol. The latter fortified his castles in England, whither the victorious Henry hurried, and the whole resistance was soon ended, Henry's Welsh allies helping in the attack on Tuthury Castle.

The failure of the revolt of 1173 completed the ruin of the old Norman baronage. The King took into his own hand their castles, and the Earl of Chester was sent to fight in Ireland. He died in 1181. His son Ralf showed by his later conduct that he had learnt the lesson of 1173.

Bertram de Verdun, lord of Alton, had been consistently loyal throughout the reign. He occupied a middle position between the old feudal aristocracy and the new men. His wife was the niece of Earl Ferrars, but he numbered among his ancestors (as we have already seen) Geoffrey de Clinton, Henry the First's Chamberlain. He himself was one of Henry II.'s most trusted ministers in the Curia Regis and the Exchequer. He once acted as Ambassador to Spain. His integrity was recognized when the King in 1170 instituted his great inquiry into the conduct of the Sheriffs, and as a result ejected many of them from their offices. Among the better men who replaced them was Bertram de Verdun. He was made Sheriff of Warwickshire and Leicestershire, and held the office for 15 years. In the great rebellion of 1173 he stood by the King. In 1185 he accompanied the expedition which attempted to make Ireland into a Kingdom for Prince John, and enjoyed the title of Seneschal.

It was soon after the rebellion of 1173 that he visited his relative the Constable of Normandy, who took him to see the religious house under the Cistercian rule at Aunay, near Bayeux. This had been founded (about 1130) by Jordan de Sai and Lucy his wife, and Richard de Humet, the Constable, had married their daughter. De Verdun was so impressed with what he saw that he determined to found a similar house on his own lands in Staffordshire. The time was favourable for developing his estates there, and the Cistercian Order was especially fitted for the work. No monks could be more suitable to the task of bringing his lands into cultivation, and he begged the Abbot of Aunay to send some of his brethren to the site he gave them at Chotes, near Alton. Two years later (1180) they moved to a more suitable spot, a few miles distant, where the ruins of Croxden Abbey still stand. Bertram de Verdun was also a benefactor to Burton Abbey.

The Cistercian Order was intended to restore the monastic system into the good grace of the world again.

The history of Burton Abbey, and especially the position it occupied in the national economy which we shall attempt to estimate in another portion of this work, shows that by this time the Benedictines had become rich owners of wide estates, with a large dependent population scattered in numerous villages, while around their Abbeys flourishing towns had grown up. The important position they had attained and the many privileges they enjoyed had begun to provoke fear and jealousy in all classes of society; in the Bishops, whose authority they neglected; in the parish clergy, whose tithes they had acquired; in the great lay landowners, who saw in them rivals at least as powerful as themselves; and in lesser folk with whom they, as landlords, came not seldom into serious conflict. They themselves appeared to have exhausted their capacity for expansion.

The Cistercian Order originated at the Abbey of Cîteaux in 1099, and the lessons of the mistake which the Cluniac revisers had made were well learned. Instead of relaxing the strictness of the original rule, the Cistercians increased its severity. They aimed throughout at austerity and simplicity, even in furniture and vestments and architecture. The plans of their houses were almost everywhere alike. Our own Croxden was almost unique among Cistercian Abbeys in England in varying from the simple square end which closed the eastern termination of their churches. It had a semi-circular apse with five radiating chapels, but even this was only a copy of its parent house. The feature emphasizes the peculiarity that Croxden, unlike most of the Cistercian houses in England, was not an offshoot

of an English, but of a Norman house. A marked simplicity in style gave a grave dignity to all their buildings, and the lives of the inmates were in general much more secluded from the world than those of the older Benedictines. Instead of being scholars and statesmen, the Cistercians were farmers. Their houses were built in lonely and secluded spots, instead of being near towns and castles, for the value of the Cistercians as agriculturists quickly commended them to all who desired the cultivation and civilization of the waste tracts into which the Benedictines had never penetrated. They became popular, and this popularity proved their ruin. The land already occupied was largely arable; the lands they received, such as the moorlands of Leek and the valleys near Alton, were mainly such as were more suitable for pasturage. To pasturage they devoted themselves, and the growth of the wool trade, which came almost at the same time, made them masters of the most profitable branch of English industry. Wealth brought ease, and their very seclusion helped the growth of avarice; and just as the history of Burton Abbey shows how the Benedictines were in the world though they professed to be not of it, so the history of the Cistercian houses of Croxden and Dieulacres shows that the monks of the new order, though they continued to be not in the world, became decidedly of the world.

It has been sometimes alleged that the regulation of the Cistercians ordering "*in civitatibus, castellis, villis, nulla nostra construenda sunt cenobia, sed in locis a conversatione hominum semotis*" was in reality a clever device to obtain lands the value of which was unrecognized by their owners. The history of the order in Staffordshire throws some light on this point.

Croxden was not the first house of Cistercians in the county, though it was the first which found a permanent settlement there.

In the reign of Stephen a small company of recluses fled from the anarchy and lawlessness around them to Radmore, far in the recesses of Cannock Chase, near where Beaudesert now stands, and founded a settlement with the assistance of Earl Ralf. To secure themselves from the depredations of both the contending parties they obtained charters from Stephen and Matilda alike, and Bishop Roger de Clinton gave his approval and sanctioned the reception of women into the house as a place of refuge, religion, and instruction. William the Abbot appears as a witness to a confirmation by Bishop Roger of the privileges and immunities of the Canons of Stone, and he helped to induce Earl Ralf to put Trentham on a firm footing. For some years they lived independently of any of the recognized orders, but the place was too remote and the state of the

country too disorderly for the permanent safety of such a defenceless house, and they soon had to join one of the great orders. They chose the Cistercian, by the advice of Matilda, and dismissed the women. Even thus they were not able to continue in the forest: food was difficult to obtain, and the foresters were lawless and made frequent depredations. Again they had to invoke the good offices of Matilda, and at length, in 1154, they received from Henry, just crowned King, the manor of Stoneleigh in Warwickshire, which he gave them at his mother's request, and whither they removed in the same year. In their last year at Radmore they had paid £61 14s. to the ferm of the shire.

The whole incident shows how peaceful men and women were driven by the godlessness of the world into the religious life, and it also effectually disposes of the sneer that the monks only accepted solitary and desolate places in default of more comfortable homes. The founders of Radmore fled from violence into the depths of the forest, the very loneliness and seclusion of which was its attraction. That they over-estimated their powers of endurance is nothing against them: the lawlessness of the times prevented them from having a fair opportunity. Yet they clung to the spot they had chosen with tenacity and perseverance, and only relinquished it when life itself became impossible.

The abortive effort at Radmore shows how the Cistercian development was dependent on social and political conditions. The desire for loneliness and isolation absolutely precluded expansion until there was some security for personal safety; advance into the wilderness could be made only in the wake of law and order. The Benedictines, establishing themselves under the protection of towns and castles, like Burton-on-Trent and Tutbury, were comparatively independent of such conditions, but the Cistercians could only follow, and not precede, order and police. The establishment of a Cistercian house, therefore, is an evident token that law reigned in the district where it arose.

The great expansion of the Cistercians in the anarchical times of Stephen is no disproof of this, but rather the reverse. It showed itself almost entirely in the North, and there comparative quiet reigned. But Staffordshire at that time was far too disorderly for any such development to be possible, as the abortive attempt which was made at Radmore shows. A generation had to grow up under Henry II's rule of law before the Cistercians could make a permanent footing in the county, but no sooner was the time ripe than, as we have seen, they came to Croxden.

There was, however, even a longer time before another step was taken. The extreme North of the county was still wild and savage, and another

interval of national disorder intervened and prevented it from being brought under discipline.

The accession of Richard I. placed a romantic soldier on the throne of the statesman. His one passion was to conduct a great crusade. Immediately he set to work to raise money for this purpose by every means in his power. Privileges, his own and those of others, he readily sold. The Bishop of the Diocese, Hugh de Nonant, bought a priory and three Sheriffdoms, as well as several manors at cheap rates, and privileges and exemptions none too creditable for the Chapters of Lichfield and Gnosall now under his own control. He was a clever, unprincipled, and plausible diplomatist, and had been in high favour. He had been one of the Pope's legates, sent to crown Prince John as King of Ireland, but had never done so. He assisted at Richard's Coronation. In 1191, when he bought the Sheriffdom of Staffordshire, he came in conflict with John's partisans, and in his attempt to substitute seculars for regulars at Coventry, Carthusian monk though he himself had been, he suffered physical violence. This remarkable attempt, quite reversing the usual order, was of course dictated less by any real desire for reform than by a desire to increase his own authority; for seculars were naturally less independent than regulars.

When Richard set out on the crusade of 1191, Bertram de Verdun accompanied him. He is found witnessing a royal charter on his way out, at Marseilles, on August 5, 1190. Loyalty, as well as the respect which both King and vassal felt for the Cistercian Order helped to attract him. The founder of Croxden took part in what was, perhaps, the most brilliant of all Richard's exploits—the relief of Jaffa on August 5, 1192, with a small force, hastily landed, in the face of Saladin himself and seven thousand Turks. In this engagement he was killed, and the chronicle of Croxden records that he was buried at Acre, on St. Bartholomew's Day following. A skeleton, swathed only in lead, and lying in a place of honour in the church at Croxden, which has been found in recent years, has been thought to indicate that his body may have been subsequently brought to England and buried in his own Abbey.

Meanwhile, Richard, returning, was captured and imprisoned. His brother John took advantage of the opportunity to try to seize the crown. He easily won over Bishop Nonant with a bribe, and the Bishop's brother, when asked by Richard to become his hostage, refused on the plea that he was Prince John's man. By enormous exertions, Richard's high ransom was paid; the Cistercians, who had standing exemption from all exactions, even gave up their whole year's shearing of wool to help in paying it. In March, 1194, the King returned. John was easily subdued; Earl Ferrers and Ralf Earl of

Chester, by capturing Nottingham Castle, helped in bringing the movement to a successful and speedy end. Bishop Nonant's brother was imprisoned; the Bishop shared the same fate, and was deprived of his Staffordshire Sherifffdom and Bishopric. The Burton chronicler says he bought back his Bishopric, but, going to Rome to explain his conduct and obtain pardon, he died at Antioch in 1198.

Of the worldly ecclesiastics of the time he was one of the worst, and his career brings before us very vividly some of the gravest abuses of the period—the placing of worldly-minded men in ecclesiastical positions, the employment of ecclesiastics in secular occupations, the low aims and intrigues which filled the minds of such as these, as well as the mischiefs resulting from the sale of offices and exemptions, and the impossibility of obtaining redress by fair means either from Pope or King. How difficult was the lot of reformers is seen in the case of Wolverhampton at this time. The evil repute of the secular canons there was so notorious that it formed the subject even of street songs, but the College claimed to be answerable to the Pope alone, and the new Dean whom Richard appointed laid the matter before the Pope himself. He said that when a worthy priest was appointed to a vacant stall the others refused to associate with him. The complaint he sent to Rome proved fruitless, and in despair he resigned his office to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Fortunately, this was Hubert Fitzwalter, nephew of Ralf Glanville, the great justiciar. He dispossessed the offenders and brought amendment, though he died (1205) before he could carry out his intention of replacing the secular canons by Cistercian monks.

On John's accession some of the barons seized the opportunity to make a protest against the influence of the new administrative nobility, whom the Royal policy had raised up within the last two generations. Earl Ferrars and others of the old historic families refused to take the oath of fealty until they had received a definite promise that their rights should be respected. The incident is important in the light of subsequent events, showing, as it does, that the new lessons of obedience to law hitherto enforced against the baronage had been learned even by those against whom it had been most effective, and could be enforced, if occasion arose, against the King.

While Archbishop Hubert Walter lived some check was kept upon John's misrule in England. The position which Bertram de Verdun had held under him in the days of his father probably accounts for the donation John is asserted to have given to the monks at Croxden—viz., a hundred shillings a year, chargeable on the Irish Exchequer, in exchange for lands previously given them in Ireland, which had probably proved unremunerative.

The death of the Archbishop in 1205 proved the beginning of John's disgrace. The story is largely related in the chronicle of the Abbey of Burton, where John visited.

Among the few who adhered to the King were Henry de London, formerly archdeacon of Stafford, Earl Ferrars, and Ralf Earl of Chester. The last especially occupied a position of great influence, and his adhesion to John was of the highest importance. By the King's grant he held for some years the Montford property near Leicester. He had married Constance of Brittany, widow of Geoffrey Plantagenet and mother of Arthur, in 1186, but he dismissed her, and was trusted by John more than any other Englishman. He stood by the King as long as it was possible to do so, hoping that his long service and great position might influence him in the right direction. When John made his ignominious surrender to Pandulf in 1213, he did so in spite of the independent protests of Henry de London, who was now Archbishop of Dublin. Henry's conduct was the more honourable as he had been one of John's most trusted counsellors, and owed his preferment to him. Earl Ferrars was one of the four lords who guaranteed the validity of the agreement with Pandulf, and when, two days later, John did homage, Earl Ferrars, with the Archbishop of Dublin, attested the act and the deed of the surrender of England. Later in the year the submission was renewed to Cardinal Nicholas, and the legate repaired to the Abbey of Burton with a magnificent retinue.

But the patriotic Archbishop, Stephen Langton, summoned his suffragans, abbots, and others to Dunstable in the early days of 1214. They protested against the Legate's intrusion, and forbade him to act against the rights of the Church of England. The protest was received by the Legate at Burton Abbey, and thus the first step in the movement which ended at Runnymede was taken there. The two Earls witnessed John's Charter giving freedom of election to bishoprics and abbeys, by which he tried to propitiate the clergy and divide the opposition. The statesmanlike Henry of London was one of the Royal counsellors who are quoted in *Magna Carta* as having advised its acceptance by the King. Shortly after he received from John the advowson of the Collegiate Church of Penkrige in part payment of a debt, which shows how the Royal chapels were used by the Kings for purely personal purposes. *Magna Carta* was not enrolled on the Patent or Charter Rolls, which seems to indicate that John never intended that it should become law, yet copies of it were ordered to be deposited in the monasteries. Nevertheless, the version of it which is incorporated in the Burton Chronicle, and a contemporary copy of which occupies the last six folios of the Burton

Chartulary, is the re-issue, in altered form, by Henry III. in 1225. The faithful Ralph Blundeville, Earl of Chester, and William Ferrars, Earl of Derby, adhered to John in the subsequent troubles which overwhelmed him. They were with him at his death in Newark Castle and were witnesses to his will.

The public career of Earl Ralf in the difficult position in which he was placed during the reign of John shows him to have been an independent and honourable man. His domestic policy shows him to have been also a wise landowner and a devout Churchman. The history of monasticism in Staffordshire shows how, far away from the storm and stress of political and religious conflict, quiet and beneficial progress was being made in spiritual and moral well-being when wise persons held positions of influence and power.

At the very time when King John was busily engaged in alienating his subjects and arousing opposition in Church and State, the Earl of Chester was showing on his own estates a better way of strengthening his position and influence. He was developing his possessions by wise and skilful methods. He established a market at Leek in 1208. In 1214, the very year when the Papal Legate received Langton's protest at Burton, he founded the Abbey at Dieulacres, close by Leek, on the site of an ancient chapel, in a wild and uncultivated spot on the Moorlands, which was indicated to him by his father's spirit. He gave it to the Cistercians, the skilful farmers and husbandmen, transferring thither the monks of Pulton in Cheshire, where the Welsh had proved troublesome neighbours, and bestowing upon them broad lands and extensive privileges. He gave them the mills at Leek on the Churnet, and ordered that all his men should grind their corn there. He transferred to them the endowments of the Church at Leek which his father had built and entrusted to them the charge of several outlying chapels. He exempted them from all tolls of merchandise throughout his Earldom. His whole action indicates not only the esteem in which the Cistercians were held, but also the value which a shrewd and wise landowner attached to their capacities for bringing order and civilization. Earl Ralf made the Cistercians of Dieulacres his agents for reclaiming the Moorlands. But it would be wrong to think his motive for founding the Abbey of Dieulacres was merely an utilitarian one. Filial piety, as we have seen, had its part, and his religious temperament is shown by the incident which is related of him soon after. He accompanied the Crusaders to Damietta in the early years of the next reign. On their return they were caught in a storm at sea, and Earl Ralf cheered his companions by expressing his confidence of safety, for he knew it was the hour when his monks at Dieulacres were at prayer.

Earl Ralf was also a benefactor to the Abbey of Burton and to the Austin Priory which his ancestor had planted at Trentham, as well as to that at Rocester; and almost at the same time as he founded Dieulacres, Roisia, the niece of his friend William de Ferrars and widow of Bertram de Verdun, who had probably originally brought the lands upon which Croxden had been built into the possession of the Verdun family, confirmed her husband's grant to the Cistercians there (1215). In Leicestershire she founded the Cistercian nunnery of Grace Dieu.

The growth and development of Monasticism in Staffordshire has now been traced, save as regards the Cistercian house at Hulton. This was founded early in the reign of Henry III. by Henry de Audley. He was Constable of the neighbouring castle of Newcastle-under-Lyme, and for some years had been busily engaged in building up a great estate in the district. His foundation of Hulton Abbey was part of this policy. The house remained under the control of the Audleys, and was their burial place for two centuries.

Such a sketch of the growth of Monasticism in Staffordshire indicates that the motives which prompted the establishment of religious houses were various and diverse. The whole period was, of course, one in which the "religious" life was much admired, even by men like Hugh d'Avranches, whose lives often seem far removed from the influences of religion. To found a religious house was a natural means of devoting wealth to the service of God; only the most hardened could despise the prayers which were offered in such foundations for the souls of patrons and benefactors, and the houses became the natural burial places of great families. The Verduns were buried at Croxden, the Staffords at Stone, the Audleys at Hulton. Sometimes the foundation of a monastery gave relief to a troubled conscience, or was built with the intention of benefiting an ancestor or a relative, as may have been the case with Canwell, as well as Dieulacres. Sometimes it was prompted by filial piety, as in the case of Dudley, Lapley, and Dieulacres.

Not seldom, as we have seen, it was prompted by utilitarian motives as well. The careful landowner saw in the monks valuable agents in promoting improvement and civilization, as is strikingly seen in the effects of the foundation of Burton, Dieulacres, and Croxden. Moreover the prudent lord knew the value of a monastery under his patronage and control in strengthening his position and extending his influence, as is seen in the case of Tutbury, Hulton, Stone, and Trentham.

CHAPTER V.

THE MONKS AS LANDOWNERS.

As a rule, when a religious house was established it was well endowed by its founder. Sometimes it started with very large possessions, and in any case benefactions usually soon flowed in upon it. Wulfric Spot endowed his foundation at Burton-on-Trent with no less than seventy-two manors. At the date of Domesday Book, less than half of these remained in the possession of the Abbey. In Staffordshire it possessed Burton-on-Trent, Branstone, Shobnall, Stretton, Horninglow, Wetmoor, Anslow, Pillatonhall, Whiston, Darlaston, Abbots Bromley, Leigh and Field, Ilam, Okeover, Casterne, Hampton-in-Blithfield, and land in Tatenhill and Stafford. Stone Priory had possessions at Stone (where it had its Manor Court), Aston, Stoke, Darlaston, Burston, Meaford, Hilderstone, Stafford, Seabridge, Fulford, Walton, Stallington, and Tittensor. Bishop Peché's deed of foundation of St. Thomas, Stafford, endowed the Priory with lands, mills, and houses, given by himself and numerous other benefactors, and further endowments came in large numbers. The first endowment of Rocester Abbey included lands in Rocester, Combridge, Denstone, Quickshill, Waterfall, and Bradley. When Earl Ralf II. refounded the Priory at Trentham by a charter signed on his deathbed he added to its endowments 100 solidates of Trentham Manor, and when Henry II., coming to the throne the same year, resumed possession of the Royal manors, including Trentham, which had been alienated, he added to its possessions. Among the many possessions obtained by Dieulacres was land at Field, which was held by the "rent" of six barbed arrows, which subsequently became six bolts shot by a catapult.

It was the same with all the houses. They rapidly became great landowners. The danger which might arise from this appeared comparatively early. In the orders drawn up by the Committee of Twelve Barons appointed by the Provisions of Oxford (1258) to conduct the business of the nation, and which are enrolled in the Annals of Burton, we read "*Purveu est ensement ke nul home de religion ne pousse nule tere acheter sanz le gré le seignur, ceo est a saver, celui seignur ke est plus precein sanz le mein.*"

In 1288 Pope Nicholas IV. gave his sanction to the levying of a tithe by Edward I. upon ecclesiastical property for six years, and a new and stringent assessment or "Taxatio" was made. Although the action of the assessors was bitterly denounced as unjust their valuation remained the basis of ecclesiastical taxation till the time of the Reformation.

The temporalities of the Abbey of *Burton* are valued at £22 12s. 4d., the tithe of which was 45 shillings and 2½d. They included three carucates at Stretton, Horninglow, and Branston, two mills at Burton, three carucates and two mills at Bromley, one carucate at Austrey, and one at Ilam. The temporalities of *Tutbury* were one carucate at Wootton with one mill and other belongings, half a carucate at Tutbury, and one at "Moch'" with a mill, etc.; total, £10 18s. 0d.; tithe, 20s. 9½d. Those at *Sandwell* included three carucates at Tamworth, with meadow and pasture, and two mills; total, £4 16s. 8d.; tithes, 9s. 8d. *Calwich*: One acre at Northwood and Stanton, and property at Ellastone, with one mill; total, 50s.; tithe, 5s. *Dudley*: Two carucates at Woodford; total, 68s. 6d.; tithe, 6s. 8d. *Rocester*: four carucates at Rocester, two at Swynnerton, and one at Kingstone; total, £10 10s. 0d.; tithe, 21s. *Lapley*: Three carucates at Lapley, one mill, one dovecote and one vivarium, half a carucate, one mill, and one dovecote at Aston; total, £28 19s. 0d.; tithe, 57s. 10½d. *Ronton*: Four carucates at Ronton, three carucates at the Grange of Claneford and Hethours, two carucates at the Grange of Kynetone, one at that of Badmak, and one at that of Ellastone, three at that of Wolvedale, Hunethalen, and Milwich, with two water-mills; total, £16 14s. 8d.; tithe, 33s. 5½d. *Stone*: One carucate at Sheperingly, near Newcastle-under-Lyme, two at Stallington, and one at Walton, and one mill at Stone; total, £40 6s. 10d.; tithe, 20s. 8d. *Dieulacres*: The manor of Leek (worth £10 5s. 8d. per annum), one mill, three carucates at the Grange of Fonake, two carucates at Westwood, and two each at Ponter, New Grange, Hulm, and Rupen, one at Hasewood, two at Swythamley, one at Ferreborewes, one at Wetewod, one at the Delde; total, £37 13s. 8d.; tithe, 75s. 4d. *Trent-ham*: Two carucates at Claxton and the profits of a garden etc., one carucate at Longton, and one at Wall; total, £5 5s. 2d.; tithe, 10s. 6d. *Hulton*: Two carucates at Grange Abbath' and one tannery, three carucates at Rushton, four at Normacot and one mill, one at Mixon and a mill; total, £20 4s. 2d.; tithe, 40s. 5d. *Croxden*: Eight carucates at Croxden Grange, two at Leyes, four at Cledere Grange, two at Musden Grange, three at Cauldon and Onecote, one mill at Cauldon, four carucates at Oaken Grange near Tettenhall; total, £36 19s. 0d.; tithe, 73s. 10½d. *St. Thomas' Priory*: One carucate and a mill at Drayton near Penkridge, one carucate at Fradswell, one at Colton, one at Maer, one at Stradcote, one at Pendeford, one at Lees near Stafford, four in Otherton and its members Cote, Epton, and Whitgreave, and a mill "infra Curiam"; total, £20 0s. 9d.; tithe, 40s. 0½d.

From the records of the Staffordshire houses we see that various motives induced people to give lands to

the monasteries. When a man entered a religious house, he often brought money or land to it: a father sometimes gave his son's portion, in goods or lands, when the latter took the religious habit. Did the son of a villain obtain ordination, how could his grateful father better show his gratitude than by making over the reversion of his burgage to the monastery? Lands were bequeathed for the maintenance of lights or to provide masses for the benefactor and his family or his predecessors. Mediæval wills generally contain legacies, large or small, to the religious houses. Sometimes the heir did not approve of the father's gift and tried to recover possession of land so given, but it was a difficult task and the monks were usually able to defeat such attempts.

The Abbot and Convent of the Monastery never died, and remained ever as ready legatees in all changes and chances of fortune. It was easy in troublous times for the monks to refuse payment of their rents and afterwards to set up the plea that the owner had forfeited his estates by treason if he had chanced to take the losing side.

In all these ways* lands were rapidly accumulated in spite of the Mortmain Acts. There are many instances of exemptions being obtained from the operation of these Acts, and some of Royal pardons being obtained for having contravened them. In 1386 the Canons of Calwich had so to obtain the Royal pardon. The monasteries went on acquiring lands under Mortmain licences down to the very end. There are instances at Burton just before the suppression.

The Monks, growing rich, had command of ready money and were able to lend to or buy from those who needed cash—it might be to some desirous of making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, or to a wealthy neighbour who had lost his lands in political troubles and desired to redeem them when peace returned, or to lesser folk overtaken by sudden necessity. Such loans were usually on the security of land, which, of course, reverted to the monastery in case the debt was not repaid. When Bertram de Verdun decided to join Richard I. in his Crusade he sold the monks of Burton the manor and advowson of Stapenhill. When Sir Hugh de Okeover's unwavering loyalty to Henry III. during the Welsh War and the Baron's Revolt seriously impoverished him and he had to sell much of his patrimony, the neighbouring Abbot of Rocester was a ready purchaser of his lands. When John de Pendeford, a verderer of the Forest of Cannock, in the latter part of the thirteenth century, took for himself a buck which had been run down by a greyhound and thus laid himself open to the severe penalties

* Some actual instances are quoted in the *Notes* to this Chapter

of the Forest Laws, he fled for his life beyond the seas and sold his manor to St. Thomas's Priory at Stafford.

Okeover was granted to Orm on the condition that on his death he should become the property of the Abbey of Burton "*Cum tota pecunia sua*;" Orm's son-in-law Andrew, obtained Leigh on similar terms, but with the added proviso that he should be buried *honorifice*.

Orm, of Darlaston, was still more explicit. He bargained that "*cum vero mortui fuerint deferentur eorum corpora sepelienda apud Burtonam et multum honorifice recipiuntur a monachis . . . Similiter et de uxore Ormi fiet quando morietur corpus ejus recipietur cum tota parte sua et cum magno honore sepelietur apud Burtonam.*"

In the Ronton Chartulary gifts of Land *cum corpore meo* occur again and again. In such cases, of course, there would be burial fees to be paid, as well as usually an endowment for requiem masses, which indicates another source of wealth.

Indulgences also were offered to donors, as when Calwich in 1391 obtained such from the Pope for those who visited and contributed to the fabric on the feast of St. Margaret and certain other days.

In their desire to add to their wealth and possessions the religious houses sometimes fell into unwise and shortsighted methods. A very favourite institution in the mediæval monasteries was the granting of corrodies.*

Sometimes these were allowances of food and clothing paid to a useful workman or agent as a retaining fee. Burton paid their agent Reginald of St. Albans in this way. They also kept a working goldsmith by means of a corrody in the twelfth century. Even so late as 1528 Dieulacres gave an annuity of £2 13s. 4d. to Thomas Arondell in return for "his good and sound counsell given." To obtain a corrody by giving lands to a religious house was a mediæval method of purchasing an annuity. Dieulacres gave a corrody to a Jew (Henricus filius Hugonis Judei), consisting of food and clothing, in return for his lands, and the arrangement appears to have been hereditary in the family.

The method was an attractive one to the monks for acquiring lands on easy terms, handing on to future generations the duty of discharging the obligations which were incurred. True, there were restrictions which were business-like. The corrody passed to the wife as a rule, but not to the son or heirs. But it was an improvident though tempting expedient which might entail a severe strain upon the resources of a monastery. That it did so appears from indications in the history of the Staffordshire

* Some examples of Corrodies are quoted in the *Notes* to this Chapter.

houses. In 1286 there were complaints against Burton Abbey that people had been unjustly deprived of their corrodies of a daily loaf of bread and gallon of ale, though they proved on inquiry to be groundless. In 1294, however, the Prior of Stone was fined 30 shillings for having wrongfully deprived a man of a corrody consisting of a daily loaf of bread and gallon of ale, a Canon's habit worth a mark yearly, provender for a horse and keep for a groom for three nights, four cartloads of wood annually, and two candles a night from Hallowmas to Candlemas.

Corrodies led to difficulties also of another kind. Edward I. had a contention with the monks of Dieulacres about a corrody which had been held by a certain Robert de Carmenton. He had been admitted a monk with an annual grant of 14 shillings for his habit, with 9d. for making it, and 4 shillings for shoes, with room, fuel, and lights; and the King asserted this had been done on his presentation. On Richard's death he tried to insist that the corrody should be transferred to another Royal nominee, but a jury decided in favour of the Abbey, denying that Robert had received his corrody by the King's command.

Such an incident stands by no means alone. Similar demands increased in frequency as the years went by. Officials who had been useful, soldiers who had been discharged, could be cheaply pensioned by being placed in the charge of the monks, and the extent of the evil may be estimated from the fact that the Bishop of Lichfield is found demanding a corrody from Tutbury for his cook. Archbishop Peckham forbade the Prior to grant it.

Instances like these show how intolerable burdens might be laid upon the religious houses by persons of sufficient authority to be able to enforce their demands. As a matter of fact, such burdens became more and more frequent as time went on, and contributed much to the financial difficulties of the religious houses, as the later history will show.

An expedient for avoiding the permanent alienation of property was to lease it for two lives only. On folio 17 of the Burton Chartulary we have Okeover and Stretton granted thus; on folio 18 "Bron-tistona," and "Withmere;" on folio 19 Pothlac and Dodsleigh, &c. Of course, the lessees under such conditions were desirous of extending their leases, and they sometimes succeeded in changing the grant "*et heredi ejus*" into "*et hereditibus suis*." Abbot Geoffrey II. (1114-50) made a lease to Robert de Ferrars *et hereditibus suis*, but to smaller men the leases were still for two lives only. His successor Robert (ob. 1177) occasionally made the longer grants, but it is not till the time of Abbot Bernard (1160-75) that they became common.

In the earlier of the Burton surveys we find sixteen years as the usual period: "*Hoc manerium [i.e., Leigh] habet Ormus ad firmam pro cs. usque ad annos xvi.*"

The number of censarii, or, as they subsequently became, free tenants, was able to be increased by leases of land which had hitherto been in the Abbot's own hands. There are leases in the Burton Chartulary of Demesne and Meadow in the time of Abbot Robert (1150-1159) and of Warland and Inland (for two lives) in the time of Abbot Geoffrey II. (1114-1150) Abbot Robert and Abbot Bernard (1160-1175).

So long as this process was confined to Demesne, Inland or Warland, it made no difference to the other tenants. When the Abbot began to enclose and lease portions of the Waste these new holdings were usually made to sons of tenants, thus adding to the number of tenants and increasing the amount of services available.

But Bishop Norbury found occasion to censure the granting of long leases in the middle of the 14th century, and just before the general dissolution they had become very common. In 1504 the Abbot of Dieulacres leased the manor of Pulton for 49 years, together with its "tithes and oblations, . . . except offerings of silver and wax offered before the image of the Blessed Mary," at a rent of £25 *per annum*. In 1534 Swythamley was leased for 70 years, and even in 1537 seven pastures near Swythamley were leased for 90 years.

The very large proportion of land which passed into the hands of the monks proved a source of much conflict with the Government, for the monasteries claimed many exemptions from national burdens. The entry in the Burton Annals for the year 1254 (the year when Henry III. foolishly took in hand to obtain the crown of Sicily for his son Edmund in order to support the Papacy against the Emperor) that the Pope allowed the King to take a tenth of ecclesiastical property for three years, is a reminder that ecclesiastical land claimed to contribute less than land in lay hands for all military purposes. The Cluniacs and Cistercians claimed entire immunity from taxation on the score of their foreign obedience, and even the Papal grant mentioned above said "*exceptis ordine Cisterciensi et Hospitalariorum at Templariorum.*" Even when such claims were over-ruled there was considerable difficulty about the collection of the money through the dependence of the houses on the Abbots abroad. Henry II. had allowed the claim in the case of the Cistercians and negotiated directly with the Abbot of Cîteaux, as Henry III. did with the Pope; but such a method was humiliating and subversive of independence, and when Edward III. definitely rejected the claim his step was one in the direction of national consolidation.

As extensive landowners the monks played an important part in social life and economic development.

Their services in bringing the land into cultivation can hardly be exaggerated. The lists which are extant of the tenants of the Abbot of Burton early in the 12th century show him to be possessed of well-cultivated, well-populated, and well-organized estates. There are villages with resident priests and inhabitants of various classes, farmers (as we should call them now), and agricultural labourers, millers, smiths, carpenters, cobblers, bridge-builders, sometimes a doctor, a weaver, a goldsmith, and a merchant, and even a jocular. The transformation of the rest of the county, the hitherto uncultivated and wilder districts, which was wrought later in the century by the Cistercians of Croxden in their secluded valley near Alton, and by those of Dieulacres in the Moorlands of the north, was not less vast. They changed wild and unprofitable wastes into profitable farms, with prosperous tenants who when the dissolution came at last, were sometimes able to purchase their holdings. Ditches and drains were well looked after and river banks attended to. The Austin Friars at Stafford had a complete scheme of waterworks in the 15th century, and the Abbey of Burton was laying down pipes for water-supply early in the reign of Henry VI. Mills had been scarce and poor at the Norman Conquest, but the records of the religious houses show how rapidly they multiplied when the monks took in hand the cultivation of the lands. Mills are signs of material prosperity, and when we see them growing numerous we may safely conclude that the district is becoming more productive as well as more populous. They were also a valuable source of revenue to the owners, either from the rent which the miller paid or from the fees exacted; all tenants had to have their corn ground at the lord's mill.

The monks of Burton, Dieulacres, Ronton, St. Thomas' (Stafford), &c. possessed salt-pans in Cheshire, and salt was a vital necessity in days when salted meat was all that ordinary people could obtain during half the year. The Cistercians especially, but in Staffordshire the Benedictines of Burton and the Austin Canons of Rocester, also, were great wool producers. They possessed huge sheep-runs. Dieulacres, Croxden, Rocester and Burton-on-Trent supplied wool to the Flemish markets and to the Florentine merchants at the end of the 13th century, and in 1310 most of the religious houses in the county supplied sheep to Edward II.'s army advancing against Scotland.

In 1326 Edward III. exacted 600 sacks of wool from Staffordshire, at the low price of nine marks a sack, for war preparations, but the Croxden Chronicler avows he never paid even that. In the

woollen industry thus developed by the monasteries we see the beginning of English commerce.

In the erection of the beautiful buildings which the monks raised, they gave beneficial employment to considerable numbers of men, from skilled masons to humble labourers. Their imposing buildings, rising above the mean hovels which surrounded them, as in the case of the young town of Burton, or in the lonelier country districts near Alton and Leek, gave an inspiration of beauty and architecture; and by their uncommon luxuries of glass windows and artistic furniture and vestments they set to all an example of comfort and a model of refinement. "At the little Priory of St. Thomas', Stafford, there was a noble church, with four bells and a clock, and chambers furnished with beds and hangings of beautiful material, while yet the lay people lay generally on straw."

The monks largely resembled the country gentry of the time, or, rather, perhaps, they resembled a club of well-to-do gentlemen living together in ease and comfort. Their houses were indeed much more comfortable than the ordinary mansions of the time, for the latter were not the permanent residences of their owners to nearly the same extent as such houses are to-day. The great households of the lay lords seem constantly to have been moving about from one place to another, taking with them even beds and furniture, and stopping for shorter or longer periods at different places. On their journeys they often quartered themselves on the religious houses. King John lodged at Burton. The Papal legate came there in the same King's reign with an enormous retinue. Henry III. was there on November 22, 1251. When Bishop Roger of Norbury (1322-59) held his visitation at Alton he slept at Croxden Abbey. Henry IV. dated many documents of his reign from Burton, and on his return from the battle of Shrewsbury he was entertained at the Austin Priory at Stafford. The monasteries were looked upon in this way as inns, and the Stafford house was paid 26s. 8d. for its hospitality on the last-mentioned occasion: it could not supply all the luxuries that were needed, and three pipes of Gascon wine had to be specially sent from the Royal stores. In the Burton Annals the Articles of Inquiry into the monasteries in 1259 included two on this subject: "*An amici [s] monachorum cum veniunt ad visitandum eos, benigne ministrentur cibis et potus de celario et coquina;*" "*An hospitalitas rite observetur.*"

The custom easily was open to abuse. In 1275 the First Statute of Westminster tried to restrict it. Such action did little to restrain the abuse. In the years succeeding Bannockburn (1314) when Lancaster forced himself into office only to show his selfishness and incompetence in

every department, open war at length broke out in England, and enabled Robert Bruce to win back nearly all Scotland. At length the threatened loss of Berwick rendered union imperative at home, and a treaty was signed between Edward II. and Lancaster at Leek in the year 1318. The Annals of Croxden record that two Cardinals, nine Bishops, and many other magnates were present. On such an occasion the neighbouring Abbey was the obvious lodging-house. The Priory of Stone complained to Bishop Norbury (1322-59) of its impoverishment through the many claims to its hospitality by travellers of every degree in consequence of its being *juxta viam regiam*, and Madeley Church was appropriated to it in order to help it. In 1382 Burton Abbey represented to the Pope that it had been so impoverished by similar claims arising through a similar cause that its monks could not live decently much less exercise due hospitality. They obtained from him permission to take the revenues of a parish of which they had previously only had the presentation.

Like other country gentry, the Abbots of the religious houses often had their "town houses" in London. The London house of the Abbey of Dieulacres was let to tenants who, of course, had to entertain any of the monks when they visited the city; and the ten villains at Cauldwell in the 12th century had to provide between them a horse to London for the Abbot of Burton.

The London house of the Abbey of Croxden was bought by Abbot William de Over at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

As progressive landowners, the monks naturally desired to improve their estates by every means in their power. One of the most obvious of such methods was by "reclaiming" the waste land, and clearing forest spaces, and by encouraging individual enterprise and skill by making portions of the common into private pastures and arable fields. Such assarting or enclosing is mentioned in the Burton Chartulary as having been made at Abbots Bromley in the time of the Abbot Nicholas (ob. 1197) at Appleby, at Sortegrave (in 1227), &c. The Priory at Ronton was built on such assarted land, and the house was known as St. Maria de Exsartis or St. Marie des Essarz. Richard Fitz Hugo de Flotesbroc (Flashbrook) gave to the almshouses of St. Anne, which stood in the precincts of Ronton Priory "*unam assartiam in campis de Flotesbroc quæ appellatur acra Sanctæ Annæ.*"

But, of course, the process of enclosing lessened the rights of other people, and was jealously watched and regulated. When the Canons of Trentham obtained Royal licence in 1205 to fence their wood, a stipulation was made that the King's deer should pass in and out unhindered. The statute of Merton

(1236) decided that the lord of the land had the right of assarting provided sufficient pasture was left for the cattle of the free tenants. There are frequent agreements therefore about the matter.*

As we should naturally expect, when the rights of the monks were in jeopardy from the action of their neighbours they were usually able to defend them. After considerable discord between Robert de Ferrars and the monks of Burton about rights in the Forest of Needwood an agreement was arranged in the years 1114-16 by which Robert was to keep two carts (*bigas*) for the purpose of carrying fuel "*de boscho mortuo ad ignem monachorum*." Some years later there was a good deal of trouble between the same monks and Sir Robert de Tok, their neighbour at Anslow, concerning the right of cutting timber and enclosing land at Shobnall. There were other matters also in dispute, and the whole incident is interesting as giving a very vivid picture of the time and also as showing how, with the accumulation of possessions, the monks inevitably became drawn into secular quarrels.

The dispute began when the Abbot's foresters found some Anslow men cutting wood at Shobnall. When sureties were demanded from these to appear in the Abbot's court to answer for their trespass, the claim was received with derision and violent abuse (*verberaverunt violenter*). It appeared also that a long hedge had been made by Sir Robert beyond the ancient boundary and goats and cattle had been pastured on the Abbot's land.

Relations became strained between the two parties and their tenants. Sir Robert hunted in the Abbot's lands without licence, and compelled him to pull down a mill he had built at Finderne, thus depriving him of 16 shillings a year rent. His men waylaid one of the Abbot's timber waggons, maltreated the waggoner, and drove off his horse. Sir Robert himself and his cousin violently assaulted two men and a woman, the Abbot's tenants, returning with a cartload of flour. The men of the Abbot retaliated by impounding the trespassing cattle and goats. Though he himself was ill, and averse from taking legal proceedings for some time, one of his monks with a servant beat one of Sir Robert's men, and there was strong language used.

At length Sir Robert had to appear in the Abbot's Court at Burton. He came to Anslow, perhaps as a precaution against personal violence, with all his household (*tota familia sua*) at great expense, and then found himself called a traitor to the Abbot. He set forth his grievances, which included losses to cattle sustained by him in consequence of the absurd (*fatuam*) method of cutting timber adopted by the Abbot's men. How the dispute was settled

* Some examples are given in the *Notes* to this Chapter.

does not appear, but in 1275 there was further trouble with Henry de Tok.

In 1357 Sir John Gresley, who had been enclosing land at Cauldwell, was checked by the Abbot of Burton, and compelled to renounce all claims to make further enclosures without the Abbot's permission. The same question arose with the same family of Gresleys soon after, but a compromise was arranged.

There were other difficulties with neighbours.

In 1256 the bridge over the river Dove at Egginton, between Tutbury and Burton, had fallen into a serious condition. For a long time a Prior of Burton named John de Stretton, "*magnæ vir auctoritatis et literaturæ eminentis*" had maintained the bridge, which he himself had built, at his own cost. After his death the inhabitants of Egginton attempted to make the Abbey of Burton responsible for its maintenance. In consequence, an inquiry was held, both in Staffordshire and Derbyshire, for the question affected each county. Neither jury, however, was able to settle the question and it was left undecided. Early in the reign of Henry III. a dispute arose between two litigants concerning some land in Staffordshire held of the Abbot of Burton, which is interesting as resulting in a trial by wager of battle in the County Court. The champions actually came into the arena, but the duel was stopped at the last moment by a compromise.

Right of way was a matter of importance to land-owners and farmers, and it was carefully maintained. In 1227 the Abbot of Croxden was found guilty of having obstructed a road and right of way at Throwley and in 1295 the Prior of Croxden was accused of obstructing a right of way from the open fields, but in this case he successfully proved he was within his right in what he had done.

Besides trouble with neighbours about encroachments, enclosures, right of way, and so forth, there was much about trespassing and straying cattle. Actions by and against the monks are frequent, sometimes possibly the result of ill feeling, but probably more often simply pointing to neglect in maintaining the fences in proper condition. Such difficulties arose not only with the greater men, as when the Abbot of Croxden obtained twenty shillings damages in 1282 from Nicholas Baron of Stafford, who had taken two of his cattle in the high road and kept them in his park on the false excuse that they had strayed into a tenement belonging to him, whereas it really belonged to the Abbey, but also with lesser people, as when the Abbot of Burton sued some husbandmen of Abbots Bromley for releasing impounded chattels, or when the Prior of Calwich and his patron Nicholas Longford sued two Ellastone men for breaking into his close and

pasturing their cattle there. In 1469 the Abbot of Croxden was sued for breaking into one of his tenant's closes, pasturing cattle there, and so threatening the man that through fear of his life he had given up the tenancy.

In 1458 the Prior of Tutbury had trouble with some of his tenants at Rolleston, whose neglect to maintain the bank of the Dove, always a river liable to floods, had resulted in the loss of 60 acres of arable land. But the monks themselves were also to blame. Bishop Norbury censured the Prior of Sandwell for neglecting to maintain his fences in proper order, and there are as many actions against the monks for damage caused by their cattle straying on the land of other people as are brought by them on account of damage sustained themselves.

When the tenants began to make efforts in the direction of freedom, of course difficulties of another kind were caused.

In 1236 the customary tenants in Abbots Bromley brought an action against the Abbot, claiming to be free tenants. From the County Court the suit went to the justices at Westminster. The Abbot asserted that the tenants held their tenements *in villanagio*, and owed marchet and an annual tallage fixed by himself. In spite of denials by the tenants, the jurors gave a verdict against them; but they retaliated on the Abbot by refusing to pay their fines and going to prison. This, of course, crippled the working of the estate, and the Abbot had to pay the fines himself in order to set them free.

In 1280 a serious quarrel arose between the Abbot of Burton and his tenants on the Mickleover estates concerning certain services which they tried to throw off. Led by the foreman on the Abbots Bromley estate, they refused to acknowledge themselves the Abbot's villains. Abbot John sent a strong body of retainers, led by six monks and five knights, who seized the cattle and sheep of the defaulters—oxen, cattle, sheep, boars, and pigs in large numbers. On the King being appealed to by the tenants, he ordered the cattle to be restored, ready to take advantage of a promising opportunity for striking at the power of a great landowner. The Abbot then ejected the villains, with their families. In the end, as was to be expected, the Abbot won the day. The tenants had to surrender at discretion, though they did so piecemeal. It is to the Abbot's credit that they were reinstated on the payment of small fines. The ring-leader, Nicholas, held out nearly to the last. The two stoutest, Richard Champion and William son of Dobbe, were all who were treated with any real severity. They were set in the stocks at Burton for a whole day and made an abject and complete submission.

There was trouble also about other matters connected with land, such as common of turbary, land

escheated through outlawry, money rents, trespassing in pursuit of game, and many thefts.

Like other great landowners, the head of a religious house had his own court or courts—the Leet, which was a communal court for civil and political affairs; the Court Baron, a feudal court for the transfer of lands and the settlement of disputes among tenants; and the Court Customary, for dealing with questions of internal economy.* But that the King's writ of right was tried in the Manorial Courts in the time of Edward III. appears from a charter granted by Hugo son of Robert of Okeover, copied into the Burton Chartulary (fol. 118).

In January, 1293, an important Assize was held before five justices itinerant in Staffordshire, in which many inquiries were made into rights and privileges claimed by the religious houses. There are examples, too, of questionable methods of obtaining property which were often pursued by the religious houses.

The following "religious" are mentioned in this connection :—the Prior of St. Thomas, near Stafford; Thomas the Prior of Ronton, the Prioress of Brewood, the Prior of Sandwell, the Abbot of Dieulacres, the Prior of Trentham, the Prior of Calwich, the Abbot of Rocester, and the Prior of Stone. The Prior of Trentham, the Abbot of Dieulacres, and the Abbot of Croxden were also at law, and in one case where the decision went against the Prior of Stone he subsequently obtained a jury of 24 who convicted the previous jury of returning a false verdict. *Quo warranto* proceedings were also held, in which the following successfully maintained their privileges :—Tutbury (free warren and view of Frankpledge), Trentham (manor and advowson of Trentham, free warren, gallows, and wayf), Stone (free warren, weekly market, yearly fair, and gallows), St. Thomas, Stafford (free warren), Dieulacres (the manor of Leek), Lapley (free warren, weekly market, yearly fair, gallows, wayf, and view of Frankpledge), Rocester (fair and market).

Calwich disclaimed free warren, gallows, and wayf, as also did Ronton, and the claim of Rocester to view of Frankpledge, gallows, and wayf by prescription was disputed and adjourned to be held *ccram Rege*. Both Croxden and Trentham were sued for lands which had formerly been in Royal hands; in each case they appealed to the Great Assize and were successful in maintaining their titles.

In the Pleas of the Crown at the same Assize the Abbot of Dieulacres claimed free warren on his demesne lands; the Master of the Knights Templars maintained his right to a view of Frankpledge, assize of bread and beer, and theng, in Keele, in virtue of a charter

* Some instances of Jurisdiction are given in the *Notes* to this Chapter.

of 37 Henry III., and showed that the King had exempted the Knights Templars of all aids and suits; the Abbot of Dieulacres lost the right of "travers" from those driving waggons and carts within his manor of Leek, and the Abbot of Burton's right of free warren in Burton was disputed. The Prior of Trentham produced his authority for free warren on his demesne, but the Prior of Stone's claim was adjourned with those of Burton and St. Thomas, Stafford. He was also found to have withheld the suit he owed to the Sheriff's tourn without justification. The Abbot of Burton acknowledged his duty of performing his suit to the Hundred Court, and of paying his fees at the Sheriff's tourn for the manor of Abbots Bromley, and maintained his right to the weekly market at Abbots Bromley and the yearly fair of three days' duration.

The Abbot of Croxden successfully maintained his right to the view of Frankpledge and assize of bread and ale in his manor of Oke, and his claim of exemption from attendance at the Sheriff's tourn for his men at Cheadle on payment of 6 pence *per annum*, and from doing suit at the Hundred Court for his manor of Cauldon.

Thomas of Lancaster fined the Abbot of Burton on several occasions for failing to make presentations at Wapentakes, and the Royal justices fined him 20 shillings in the reign of Edward III. for failing to exercise effective police supervision, and ordered him to re-erect at Stapenhill the gallows which had disappeared. Sleigh's *Leek* gives a detailed description of the estates of the Abbey of Dieulacres made at the surrender by William Davenport, Bailiff of the Abbey, from which it appears that the Abbot held a Court Leet every three weeks, which was sometimes attended by as many as three or four hundred persons. His gallows still stood at the end of the town of Leek in token of his right of Infangthef, and he had the right of free warren of birds and beasts, under penalty of £10. The Sheriff could not enter the Abbot's estate to serve writs without the Bailiff's consent. The Abbot's fair was held at Leek yearly for seven days at the feast of St. Arnulph (July 18), and his weekly market every Wednesday. Edward I. granted the Abbot of Rocester a fair and a market, and in 1440 Henry VI. granted a market and two fairs.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MONKS AS AGRICULTURISTS.

It may now be of interest to attempt an investigation into the way in which the religious houses farmed their lands and managed their estates. At first, of course, they were their own agriculturists, but as time went on they more and more leased them out to others. Fortunately, we have much valuable information on the subject, especially as regards the possessions of the Abbey of Burton. Besides the Burton Chartulary, the Salt Society has printed chartularies, original or compiled, of the houses of Dieulacres, Ronton, Stone, Trentham, and St. Thomas, Stafford.

The Burton Chartulary as it now exists was written during the 13th and 14th centuries, with later interpolations and additions. It includes two surveys of the Abbey lands, which enable us to form an excellent idea of the economy of the estates. They are attributed by a 15th-century scribe to the time of Abbot Nigel (who died in 1113) and Abbot Geoffrey (who died in 1115). But from internal evidence it is plain that they date from a little later, probably the end of the first quarter of the century, which is, however, a very early date for such documents. They are among the earliest of monastic surveys, and not only supply valuable information about the possessions of Burton Abbey but give an admirable picture of the way the monks managed the estates and possessions, which, as was related in the last chapter, they accumulated in such numbers.

They relate, as has been said, to the earlier half of the 12th century, but of all landlords the monks were the most conservative, and much of the information they give would apply equally well to far later periods, especially when taken in conjunction with the interesting collection of leases and other documents which follow the surveys in the Burton Chartulary. The surveys may be depended upon as being reliable records of existing facts, for they were made on the strength of sworn inquests. They were necessary to the Abbot as records of services and duties due to him, as well as for checks on steward and bailiffs.

They usually begin with three essential pieces of information—the agrarian capabilities of the land—arable cultivation being the chief department of work—its rateable value, and the nature and amount of the rent or services which it produced.

For instance, at the beginning of the earlier of the Burton Surveys we are told of Branstone (1) *est Inlandæ dimidia hida ubi possunt esse aratra iii.*

nunc sunt ii. ; (2) terra hominum se defendit pro hida et dimidia ; (3) Villaini sunt Ulfi etc quisquis horum tenet ii. bovatas.

That is (1), the Inland was half a hide, and it could afford work for three ploughs, though there were but two; (2) the rateable value of the folk-land was $1\frac{1}{2}$ hides; (3) the tenants were seven villains (each holding the usual villain's amount of bovates).

(1) The first item does not profess to be a precise definition of extent. The hide was not a fixed measure of size, though on an average it comprised 120 acres, but represents what was the usual holding of a household. When it was actually under plough it was often called a carucate. That the information about the ploughs is similarly a statement of fact, and not a measure of extent, is explained by the wording respecting Leigh: "There is as much Inland as can be ploughed by two ploughs." Elsewhere we read of "Eight bovates—that is, land for one plough." Two bovates made a virgate, and four virgates a hide. The usual team of oxen for a plough was eight; sometimes the full complement was not available; at Appleby, where there were three ploughs, there were only 23 oxen. The driver walked backwards in front of his team.

(2) The second item gives the ratable value of the folk-land, the demesne in the Abbot's own occupation being exempt.

(3) The third item gives the information required by the landlord and the steward. It tells what the value of the estate was to him in money and services.

On each estate or manor the land comprised "waste," arable land, and meadow land, and the "tenants" had shares in each.

The waste was a large tract of land often ill-defined, and therefore productive of many disputes as to boundaries and trespassing, especially when population increased. It was used by all the tenants, their rights of pasturing cattle, pigs, goats, &c., cutting of turf for fuel, mowing of grass, gathering of wood, and so forth being carefully defined in proportion to the size of their holdings. Notices of fencing, ditching, and enclosing point to progress.

The *arable land* was the most important portion of the estate. It was held by the "tenants" in scattered strips, defined by narrow borders of turf. It was ploughed by the common ploughs, to which each contributed his share of oxen. While the grain was growing it was enclosed by light fences, but when the harvest was gathered it was thrown open for the cattle to range over until the next crop began to appear. This was the simple method of manuring the land.

The Abbot's strips were often intermixed with those of his "tenants," and if any changes or developments took place they would probably result from the action of his steward or bailiff.

The *meadow* land, in which the tenants had similar strips, was enclosed till the time of haymowing and haymaking, after which it became common pasture.

The duty of maintaining the fences both on the arable land and on the meadow land was obviously important to prevent damage to the crops by straying animals. It was a duty which was often neglected, and there were many actions for damages and trespass in consequence.

Obviously, under such circumstances everyone had to conform to the same rules and follow the same methods; any independent action would dislocate the arrangements of the whole community.

Only in the *closes* held by individual tenants, or in the *curtilages* round their houses, could there be much special method or individual action. These were much more really the "property" of their owners, who enjoyed carefully-guarded rights and jealously-preserved immunity from interference.

The "tenants" were of various kinds. They were broadly divided into money tenants and service tenants, but at the time of the Burton Surveys the progress of merging the latter into the former class had already begun. It was obviously much more convenient to receive rent in money where possible, but rent by service was not without its advantages to the landlord, and it lingered on for centuries.

The tenants who held their land by rent (*ad malam, ad censum*) are called *censarii*. At Appleby they are called *puri censarii*. Though they paid a money-rent and were free from the week work which the inferior tenants had to perform, they supplied the oxen for the ploughing and fixed labour in harvest. These were, of course, the seasons when labour was especially in demand. For instance, at Stretton, in Burton, among the *censarii* are Ailward and Edric, who had to reap *cum suis* three times in August, and to plough twice in the year. The two seasons of ploughing are explained elsewhere to be "semel in hyeme et semel in quadragesima." They had also to do fencing for the Abbot and to attend the hunt. The *censarii* sometimes had men under them.

Not only was the *censarius* restricted in his methods, but also in the disposal of his lands. He could transfer his croft, but not his share in the common fields, because the latter had to provide its share in the common teams and common services. To pass them out of the community would be to dislocate the whole system of agriculture. Accordingly, when holdings are transferred or divided there must be provision for the performance of services and dues. When Orm's land at Branstone was divided among his three sons, one Ulvet paid two shillings for the two bovates, which were his portion of the folk-land, and performed the services of the *censarius*; the two others, Raven and Leysing, had the ten bovates on

the Wasteland and Inland for eight shillings and attendance at the Hundred Court. At Appleby, Aluric's three sons, Godric, Ailwin, and Edric, inherited his eight bovates for 12 shillings and their services.

At Winshill we read "*Sochemanni sunt isti. Elwinius tenet ii. bovates pro iis. et debet ii. perlicas ad curiam et ii. ad lucum.*" Tedric and Godric are also named, and the entry proceeds, "*Cum aliquis horum obierit heredes eorum debunt xvjs de heriete.*" Elsewhere, several are noted as holding bovates "*de terra sochemannorum,*" and one holds land "*sicut sochemannus.*" It will be noticed that the names of the three Sokmen we have mentioned are English, and that they are the few remaining representatives of a body which was formerly larger. They appear to be the survivors of a "colony" of descendants of English freemen holding by old hereditary rights and owing the old English custom of paying the heriot, the deceased's best beast or chattel, though this had been commuted for a fixed sum of money. The Sokmen were largely independent of manorial authority and their services were fixed, but they were under manorial jurisdiction. They may have originated in the voluntary union of a number of small landowners under the protection of a lord, and the colony at Winshill is an interesting survival. It shows how the Sokmen were disappearing by diminution of numbers and by the tendency to assimilate their tenures to those of other "tenants."

The Abbot of Burton had the best beast of all persons dying within the parish of Caudon in right of his chapel in Caudon.

Below the *censarii* were the *villani*. These held their lands by service (*ad cpus*). They were either full *villains* (*villani plenarii*) holding usually two bovates and working two days a week, or half *villains* (*villani dimidii*) holding one bovat and working one day. The former were called pure *villains* at Appleby. The position of the *villains* is very clearly indicated in the Burton Surveys, as they provided the main part of the labour required for working the estates. Their holdings are given in bovates, showing that their shares had fixed relations to the plough teams. The "bovat" as a rule included a croft and meadow, but not always: "*Prefata ii. bovate quae tenet Filmundus carent crofto et prato.*" For anything in addition some additional service had to be rendered. Among the *villains* at Stretton, Robert, besides his normal holding, "*habet i. domum super Inlandam et uxor ejus operatur j die;*" and Hadewi had 25 acres for three shillings.

The *villain* services at Abbots Bromley are very fully given:—To work two days a week, to find carts for carting, to plough twice a year, and reap thrice in August, to make malt, to fetch salt and fish, or to pay a fine of twopence per load; to pay seven-

pence for using the Abbot's pastureland. At Burton, besides the week work, they had to carry a load of wood and provide two hens at Christmas, to pay "pannage" for the swine they pastured, and twopence for each time they sent their carts into the Abbot's wood. The Wetmore villains enjoyed free access to the Abbot's wood.

The villains were sometimes under the *censarii*. In the entry relating to Leigh we read that Aviet held one carucate for eight shillings and the service of his plough in Lent thrice, with one man from his own household, and from each of his villains' houses for mowing. Similar services were required from *censarii* at Mickleover and Finderne. They were bought and sold with the land. They were liable to exactions very much more according to the will of the Abbot than the *censarii*. The ten villains at Cauldwell jointly provided a horse to London, and carts for carrying food when and where it was required. The Mickleover villains had to carry a load to the Abbot's garden when required. But the villains could not be bought and sold as mere chattels, though when the land was sold they were sold with it. And even on the days when they were working for the Abbot they were allowed time for driving home and milking their cattle if they had any.

The most usually accepted mark of servile tenure was the liability to marchet or maid's fee when their daughters married. When Abbot Bernard (1160-75) held out to Robert the chance of obtaining his freedom on payment of 62 pence the marchet of 20 pence was retained. Again when Abbot Laurence in the early part of Henry III.'s reign was able to prove that his tenants had been accustomed to such liability they were adjudged to be in *villenagio* in spite of their protests to the contrary.

The *bovarii* were the men who looked after the oxen used for the Abbot's ploughs. Each man had half a team under his charge. At Stapenhill three of them held respectively 22 acres of inland, nine acres, and six acres. At Littleover, four of them held one bovat of land and two acres of marsh each, for making the irons of three ploughs. They are sometimes classed with the villains, and usually held two bovates each. At Stretton we read of the four *bovarii* "*quisque habet ii bovatas et iiij acras seminatas pro officio suo, et uxores eorum operantur i die, acras autem debent reddere seminatas quando deferent boves.*"

The *colseti* were what we should now call cottagers or farm labourers. They held little more than their cottages with the "garden" adjoining. At Wins-hill it is expressly noted that they held a curtilage with their cottages.

Sometimes, however, they held more. "*Alwi colsetus habet j domum et j croftam de Inlanda et j acram prati et operatur j die.*" Usually they had

no part in the common meadows, and as they usually had no cattle they had no share in the fallow pasture. Their services, which were one day's work each week, as mere labourers, were early commuted for money payments.

The cottagers' portion of the estates was not always held by cottagers. At Witmere, Fromund had four bovates of the cottagers' land, but he had to perform the cottager's services although he was a *censarius*; Sewi the *bovarius* also had a bovate of cottager's land.

The term *bordarius* for cottager, though common in Domesday Book, seldom appears in the Burton Surveys. At Field, however, there was Edeva, a *bordaria*, who worked one day per week like the rest, and at "Wulfrichstone" there were two *bordarii*. Ailwin, a *bordarius*, was leased with land at Stretton, by Abbot Robert (1150-1159). Philip of Willington gave with other property a widow named Bela with her house in Burton.

Nativi, or serfs, are seldom mentioned, as they were unconnected with any holdings which were liable to services. They were merely personal bondmen working at command, and were bought and sold as chattels. Abbot Thomas de Packington (1281-1305) gave to the Abbey of Polesworth "Henry our native," with all his belongings. In 1270 Abbot John de Stafford bought a house at Stretton and with it "a certain rustic named Reginald who held it '*ad voluntatem Abbatis*.'" Such slaves were probably few in number and were diminishing from a variety of causes. In the later Survey one man, "Gothus," held "*una mansura vasta*" for twopence.

Manumission is seldom mentioned. It was not very important, as slavery existed to a small and constantly decreasing extent; so that no disgrace attached to the position of villains, and whatever difference there was between freemen and villains was steadily being obliterated. The following instance of manumission is interesting because it retains the right to the marchet, as has already been mentioned: Ego Bernardus Abbas etc concessimus huic Roberto fratri Briennii xxx acras terræ in Assehurst ad perticam xx pedum et dimidii tenendas hereditario jure etc. eo tenore ut singulis annis inde reddat vs. Concessimus etiam ei has libertates ut si aliquando a nobis recedere voluerit, dabit nobis xiid. et salvo jure Ecclesiæ liber recedat quo sibi placuerit, filias quas amodo habuerit cum maritare eas voluerit dabit xxd. et maritabit etc. In the time of Abbot Robert (1150-1159) Reginald and his heirs received "*terram quæ fuit Gamel de Stretona quam tenuit et quam reliquit in manu Abbatis, id est v bovatas de Warlanda et ix acras de Inlanda etc et ipse Gamel pro redemptione suo et suorum exiit et recessit ab Abbate et a terra Abbatice solutus et quietus ut iret quocunque vellet.*"

The management of the estates, with such complicated arrangements for cultivation, was under the general supervision of a steward (*senescallus*). He was the Abbot's representative in business matters. The Steward's name under Abbot William de Melbourne (1200-1210) was Roger. In 1275 it was Ralph de Burgh. Hennald the steward was one of the witnesses to Bertram de Verdun's gift to Burton of lands in Stapenhill. Under Abbot Lawrence (ob. 1260) the Steward was John of Stapenhill. In 1292 his name was Matthew de Viliers.

A steward of Trentham was Robert de Badenhall.

The steward made the round of the estate and saw that the resident bailiff on each, where there was one, did his work properly. He had considerable authority, though he had to hold in regard old-established customs. He presided in the Manor Court, though on occasion the Abbot presided in person; this might be when serious disputes had arisen with the tenants which, when they began to strive after freedom, sometimes assumed dangerous proportions. If the services were not performed the land reverted to the Abbot.

The tenants had their own official as the lord had his bailiff. He was called the foreman (*prepositus*), and held his office by personal fitness rather than by any superior wealth, for he is not found with a larger holding than the rest. He appears always to have been one of the villains, and usually with only the villain's ordinary amount of two bovates, though at Finderne he held three bovates (for four shillings and sixpence). At Appleby, Godwin the Foreman held $2\frac{1}{2}$ virgates *ad opus* and $1\frac{1}{2}$ *ad censum* (four shillings). Though a villain he represented the whole village in the the courts and on juries, and apportioned the services among the various "tenants." His office cannot have been a sinecure, and that it was not popular is indicated by the fact that it was always held by a villain. At Rushton Spencer the head of the freeholders when Dieulacres was dissolved was called the Headborough.

The Monks also found it necessary to employ legal advisers. The Abbey of Burton kept one at an annual retaining fee. In 1333 John de Aslakeby, clerk, claimed five years' arrears of his annual retaining fee, which had been five marks and the promise of a benefice, but it was asserted he had refused his services when Bishop Roger had made a claim to visit the Abbey.

The tenants lived in small villages, each with its foreman, and many with a resident priest. The villagers probably united to employ herdsmen, shepherds, and swineherds; there were also woodmen (*forestarii*) and police officials. The Abbot's stocks and his gallows had to be maintained, and if order was not kept the royal justices made inquiries and the right of jurisdiction might be lost, as we have already seen.

The whole organization—social, agricultural, economic—centred round the monastic owners, and was framed primarily to fulfil their requirements. When the land had to be ploughed the Abbot's demesne and Inland were ploughed by the ploughs of the "tenants" drawn by their oxen, and tended by their labourers. It was harrowed and hoed by tenant service, though sowed by the Abbot's servants with the Abbey corn. The arable part of the folk-land was similarly ploughed by the common ploughs, but was sowed at the expense of the tenants. Till the grain begins to spring the ploughed land lies open for the cattle to range over, but when the green shoots appear it is enclosed with fences by the "tenants" until Lammas-tide, when harvesting begins. The reaping of the corn, barley, and oats is largely done by the services of the tenants. They also do the carting.

At the Abbot's mill, sometimes kept in his own hands as at Winshill, but more often rented to some tenant, all the grain is ground, and the mill fees are a lucrative source of revenue.

The mill at Leigh was held at a rent of four shillings. At Potlock two men held the mill, with a house and croft, for 50 shillings. At Abbots Bromley it was worth eight shillings. At Darlastone there was a mill which is described as good.

Similarly with the meadow land. During the autumn and winter it lies open for the cattle to range over. When summer approaches it is fenced in, demesne and folk-land, and straying and trespassing cattle are impounded and have to be redeemed by payment of fines. At the proper time the whole village mows and carries the hay.

Besides the carting of farm produce, much other work of conveyance had to be done by tenant-service.

There was also sometimes the duty of escorting and entertaining the Abbot and Monks, when they visited the estates or went to markets, both for the sake of adding dignity and also as protection against highwaymen. In the Okeover Chartulary, compiled in the reign of Edward II., it is stated that Sir Roger de Okeover held the manor of Okeover of the Abbot of Burton, rendering two marks in lieu of all services and going with the Abbot to London on the business of the house at the Abbot's expense.

Even so late as 1504 the Abbot of Dleulacres leased the Manor of Pulton on the condition of hospitality to himself with twelve mounted companions for six days twice a year, wine, fresh salmon, and oysters excepted; and the cellarer and other "servants" of the Abbot were to be entertained as often as they visited the Manor.

Of course, additional labour was required at various times, such as the busy seasons of ploughing and reaping. Much of this was provided for in the terms

of some of the holdings, especially the extra labour in harvest and ploughing. At Mickleover, we are told that each of the villains, in addition to his two days' work each week, carried a load to the garden when required, and ploughed once in the winter and twice in the spring. Edwin of Pillatonhall agreed to work for the Abbot and monks whenever they needed it and asked for it.

There were women tenants, and these are mentioned as performing services, often apparently of the same nature as those of the men. The wives of the four bovarii at Stretton each worked one day per week. Among the censarii at Wetmore occurs, "*Levine mater eorum (habet) ii bovatas pro iis cum predictis consuetudinibus et perticarum et arandi et secandi.*" At Field, "*Edeva est bordaria et operatur i die.*" At Winshill, among the cotseti, is "*Godeva vidua,*" and it is noted "*quisque tenet i cortillagium et operatur i die in ebdomada.*"

It was more natural, however, for a woman to pay rent, if only for the reason that her farmwork could hardly be as efficient as a man's. At Appleby, among the Censarii who perform some services, Avelina alone pays money only; sometimes when a widow continued her husband's holding a change was made from service to rent. Matilda, daughter of Swan of Littleover, inherited her father's property in the time of Abbot William (1200-1210), "*exceptis viii. acris in veteri campo,*" and held it at a rent of two shillings. At Mickleover the wife of Aluric paid three shillings for the two bovates which Aluric formerly held *ad opus*.

In the earlier chartulary Godeva was a censaria at Littleover; in the later she had married Edulf, and they paid five shillings for their four bovates.

The Abbey estates were divided between land which the Abbot farmed himself and land let out to others. The former was called the Demesne (*in dominio*). At Burton the latter included the inland, the warland, and the folk land (*terra hominum*).

The demesne is described by the number of ploughs which had to be supplied to work it. Sometimes there were fewer than it really required. It was not rateable as the folk land was, but when portions of it were let out to tenants these partook sometimes of the nature of the demesne and sometimes of the folk land in this respect. In the former case they were called inland, in the latter case warland.

That the inland was demesne land is shown by such an entry as that relating to Burton, which records that there is inland for two ploughs on the demesne. But that inland and demesne were not synonymous terms is shown by the Appleby entry. The land there amounted to 49 virgates, of which 24 were on the demesne, yet "*In Appleby nichil inlandæ est.*"

The amount of inland let to tenants tended to increase. When the earlier survey was made only two tenants at Branstone held land on the inland, Orm, who had 23 acres, and Aschetillus, Wardbois (i.e., Wood-ward), who had two bovates.

When the second survey was drawn up, no less than ten tenants had shares; Orm had four bovates, Wallevus 14 acres besides $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres of meadow, Godwin and Toti one each, the Woodward had one (without a croft), Trascemura had 40 acres of meadow and one acre besides, Gildenhele the cottar and Edwin the bovarius had a house each. Brunning the foreman had two bovates and Uwin had a curtilage. The inland was not rateable: "In Appleby, *nichil inlandæ est, idest quæ sit sine geldo regis*."

The warland was also part of the demesne. At Willington "*Warlanda se defendit pro iii. carucatis: in dominio sunt*."

The nature of the warland may be deduced from several entries. Of Whiston (Penkridge) we are told, "*Terra warlanda se defendit pro i hida et sunt in ea vi waræ, ex quibus waris tres sunt in dominio ubi possint esse ii. aratra. Ceteras iii. tenent vi. villani ad opus, quisque scilicet dimidiam Waram et quisque operatur ii. diebus et quisque reddit iii. denarios ad Festum sancti Martini*." "*Se defendit*" is the usual financial formula, so that the warland is shown to be rateable. The wara is evidently a share in the warland, as is even more plainly shown from the other Survey, where we are told of the same estate, "*Terra warlanda se defendit pro i. hida et sunt in ea vi. waræ*," and the word suggests a connection with the old English verb *werian*, which is the equivalent of *defendere*. Another suggestion is that "it was lands specially subject to some military burden or tax for military purposes," from which the Abbey land as a whole was exempt. Its position is indicated in one case by the description of a holding being "*inter warlandam et Inlandam*."

The cultivation of the warland is seen to be improving. At Branstone it consisted of 26 bovates, which were held at the time of the earlier Survey by eight villains holding two bovates each and five tenants each holding a similar amount, but paying money-rent. When the later Survey was drawn up, there were only five villains, with one bovarius (holding one bovate) and seven tenants *ad malam*.

There are other indications that the land was improving. For instance, a tenant at Stretton held two mills for 25 shillings for three years, and then he was to pay 30 shillings.

Some idea of the stock on the land is occasionally given. At Branstone there was half a hide of Inland, capable of giving work to three ploughs, though there were but two. There were one mare, 24 cows, one bull, 14 calves, and seven beasts being fattened for table. At Leigh there were a horse and a mare, 33

cows, two bulls, 11 calves, 17 beasts being fatted, 80 goats, and 28 swine.

Progress usually brought a change from services to money-rent, but the reverse sometimes occurred.

The inconvenience resulting from working a developing estate by services was always felt, and services were readily commuted. At Wetmore "*Frawinus Bracedorius habet iii bovatas pro iij s. et debet facere predictas consuetudines nisi perdonetur ei.*"

The process of commuting services for money-rent steadily proceeded. Abbot Bernard (1160-75) granted to John de Willington 12 bovates in Finderne with six acres of demesne, two of pasture, and four bovates in Mickleover free of all service for 16 shillings a year.

Many discharged their obligations partly in money and partly in services.

Leuric rented two bovates for 32 pence and two days' work per week from the Feast of St. Peter up to Martinmas, and several others are in a like condition. The position is clearly expressed in such an entry as the following:—"*De hiis quæ sunt ad malam tenet Edricus qui et villanus est unam bovatom ad censum et unum parroco pro xxd*"—he was an unfree tenant and yet paid rent. At Stretton, Hadewi the villain paid three shillings for 25 acres. On the other hand, Alured is called a Censarius, as he pays six shillings for four bovates, but he has also to supply his plough thrice in the year and a horse in Lent for harrowing, and a man in summer for hoeing and one for reaping, one day a waggon for carrying the Abbot's hay; in August he owes six days' service—on two days one man for reaping, on two days two men, on two days his whole household. The food for these is to be supplied by the Abbot. He is also to carry messages when he is ordered. Part of one man's rent (1160-75) is to provide a salmon in Lent, and another had to supply 500 good fat eels from the Trent on St. Andrew's Day. There are tenures of white gloves, and two millers had to pay fifty shillings a year besides gifts of fish according as Providence sends them. Hugh of Ridware had to give the Abbey of Burton *unam libram piperis* at the Feast of St. John Baptist, and Bertram de Verdun a pound of incense on St. Modwen's Day for land at Field. There was a service called Stodh at Appleby. S. Thomas's Priory at Stafford gave, in 1182, in return for half a virgate of land, *unum baconum et unam poneriam anone et tunicam*, and a few years later they gave 5½ marks, one hog, and one poneria of corn.

Ditching was carefully attended to, and is frequently mentioned among the work for which the tenants were responsible. Ralf was a money-paying tenant of the Abbot of Burton at Appleby at the time of the earlier Survey, and he had to do two perches

of ditching at Burton and two at the Abbot's wood. River banks had to be maintained by those who had lands adjoining in order to prevent damage from floods.

Besides the land which the Abbot farmed himself, the parish priests farmed the glebe and other land also. At Branstone, Edric the Monk paid 100 shillings for land rented from Burton Abbey; he also had the lesser mill at Winshill. At Cauldwell, among the *censarii*, is Elwin the Deacon, who held one virgate for two shillings. The Abbot's nephew Herbert succeeded two tenants at Branstone, showing how the English tenants might easily be dispossessed by Abbots of "foreign" sympathies. Another "nephew" was Ralf, nephew of Abbot Nicholas I. (ob. 1197) who held the office of Camerarius at the Abbey.

Although the manorial system seems at first sight to be very rigid, there was in reality a good deal of elasticity. Ploughing was usually the most important part of the farmwork, and the whole organization was arranged mainly with a view to it. But on the Burton estates pasturage also was important. Many tenants held their own meadows. At Branstone, Wallevus held $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres of meadow with 14 acres on the Inland and Trascemusca one acre; at Stretton, William held three acres of meadow, Hugh le Sele four acres, &c. Abbots Bromley is an instance of a manor farmed to the tenants themselves.

It was farmed to the tenants in a body, being rated at half a hide, which in this case was equal to 70 shillings, though of this Robert de Ferrars paid an eighth penny on account of four bovates which he had there. The five villains held two bovates each by the usual service of two days a week with additional services, which, however, might be commuted for a fixed payment. The seven tenants paying money-rent rendered extra services also; and the priest farmed his glebe, as well as thirty acres besides. All the wood was over and above the ferm.

From the later Survey we learn some additional particulars. The manor had been leased to the tenants for twenty years, and they now paid 100 shillings. The wood was still in the Abbot's hand, and the tenants undertook the duty of looking after it in return for the grant of pasturage and hay, which the Abbot had made to them on their request. The two bovates which the Priest held were the glebe attached to the church. The men who are named as holding the Manor are by no means solely the largest landowners. Although Godwin and Orm held four bovates for six shillings, Bristoald and Leuric held two bovates for four shillings, which is no more than most of the others. It appears, therefore, that the four named with the Parish Priest

were those who were responsible for the "rent" on behalf of the whole body, for the manor is said to be held by "the men" (*tenent homines*).

The famous Hobby-horse Dance at Abbots Bromley has been explained with some probability as a survival in picturesque form of a suit of service connected with forest rights: this twelfth-century grant of Abbot Geoffrey to his tenants may be its ultimate origin. There are other instances of partnerships among the tenants. At Field, 20 bovates were held by the men of the village: Andrew had it *ad firmam* for 20 shillings a year, and was to find the suitor to the Shire Court. Two men held Leigh on a 16 years' lease for 100 shillings a year, the Abbot retaining enclosures for as many cattle and pigs as he pleased. This partnership arose between the drawing up of the first and second Surveys.

Abbot Geoffrey of Burton (1114-1150) is also found letting land on stock and land lease. "*Haec est conventio etc inter Gaufridum Abbatem Burtoniæ et Andreæ hominem suum ligium, etc. Concessit ei Abbas ipsi Andreæ et heredi suo in fedfirmam illam partem Leguæ quam prius tenuerat Ebrardus Clericus et post ipsum Aisulfus Presbiter cum hominibus et cum pecunia quam illi acceperant etc.*" The plan was a useful one for attracting tenants, and it was a wise method of investing, and it therefore commended itself to landowners who desired to be free from the work of cultivating the land themselves. Leigh had previously been in the occupation of Ebrard the Clerk and then of Aisulf the Priest, and Abbot Geoffrey leased it to Andrew his liegeman for a term of two lives, with its occupants and stock, the latter to be returned to the Abbey at the expiration of the lease in good condition. The system continued to be practised by the monasteries in many cases down to their dissolution.

CHAPTER VII. LITERARY.

What has already been said of the monks and their manifold and varied interests shows that the last thing which can be said of them is that they were misanthropes and recluses, withdrawing themselves from the world and confined within the narrow circle of their own societies. Something like that had doubtless been the original ideal, but it soon ceased to be the fact. It might have been better both for the monks and the world if a nearer approach to it had been maintained, but in the course of time they were brought into close and constant contact with all classes of society. Their business relations with tenants and townsmen were not less intimate than their acquaintance with Royal and civil officials. Barons, pilgrims, merchants were frequent visitors. To a great Abbey like that at Burton-on-Trent came all the political news of the day. Its annals are consequently full of information of the greatest value, and the habit which obtained of copying out in full everything that seemed of interest or value has resulted in the preservation among the monastic documents of constitutional deeds of the first importance. When *Magna Carta* was issued, revised and amended by Henry III. in 1224, a large grant was made to the King, and Burton paid DCCC. marks. A copy of this Charter was sent to the chief religious houses, and the one which went to Burton is bound up with the Chartulary of the Abbey, while a copy is incorporated in the Annals. Following it in the Chartulary is a copy of the earlier Charter granted by Henry I. on his accession in 1100. For the whole reign of Henry III. the Annals of Burton are a valuable storehouse of information for the historian, and it is noteworthy that they give the story of those years from a remarkably national and independent standpoint.

The Chronicles of the Abbey, like other written matter upon which the monks were employed—service books, which constantly required renewing, histories, and other things of which for one reason or another it was desired to have copies, leases, conveyances, transfers, and all the accounts connected with their many estates—were written in the *Scriptorium*. The Chronicle of Burton is extant in two copies, one of which is now in the British Museum. The other remains in the Library of the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield. This latter is the older, and was written in the third quarter of the 13th century. Much of the earlier portion is avowedly compiled from Hoveden, with occasional small

additions and the interpolation of the elections and deaths of the Abbots of Burton. In the year 1189 in speaking of Richard I. the writer says:— "*Quantus etiam fuerit si quis scire voluerit, legat chronica magistri Hugonis de Hoveden*," and he proceeds to give extracts from Hoveden down to the year 1201. The mistake he makes in calling him Hugh instead of Roger shows he had not Hoveden's original chronicle before him, but was himself transcribing from a copy which he had borrowed. This was the usual practice. A monastery, when it decided to begin a volume of its Annals, borrowed the Chronicle of some other house and copied it out, adding occasionally matters of local interest and sometimes omitting details, but usually making no attempt at the correction of mistakes or blunders. Naturally in the transcription, further errors were liable to be made. For instance, in the Burton Chronicle the copyist accidentally omits a whole sentence in copying out the Assize of Measures in 1197, though Hoveden gives it correctly.

The copy which is at Lichfield was apparently made soon after the year 1258, when the Canons were stirred up by the national spirit of reform to emulate the example of so many of the monasteries by drawing up their own Annals. For this purpose they began by making a copy of the Burton Chronicle so far as it had then been compiled—viz., just after recording the adhesion of Richard of Cornwall to the Provisions of Oxford, at Michaelmas, 1258. Their new-found zeal proved to be short lived, for their design was never carried out, and the Lichfield Annals were never made. Eight brief notes were subsequently added in various years from 1264 to 1305, by casual writers and at long intervals, showing that the secular canons, unlike the monks, had no definite tasks either in the Scriptorium or elsewhere.

The Lichfield copy, however, was made with some care and was sufficiently localized where necessary. For example, in recording William I.'s gift of Mickleover and Littleover, it changes "*dedit nobis, videlicet monasterio Burtoniensi*" into "*dedit monasterio Burton.*" Sometimes additional details are supplied. The Chronicle at Burton records Bishop Gerard's death in 1084, but the Lichfield copyist adds the exact day of the month, "*ii. Idus Jan.*"

The copy which is now in the British Museum was made, excepting the first few leaves, in the 14th century. It adds to the earlier version the records of four more years—1258 to 1262—comprised in twenty-six pages, but probably some additional pages are missing, as the manuscript ends imperfectly. The extra pages are some of the most interesting of all, giving, as they do, the Provisions of the Twelve Barons appointed at Oxford, in the original Norman French in which they were drawn up, and the pro-

test lodged by the "*communitas bacheloriarum Angliæ*" against the conduct of the baronial party at Oxford.

The whole of the Burton Annals is of the greatest interest and value, as has already been said.

In John's reign they give a striking account of the King's interview with the Pope's Ambassadors at Northampton about the election of Archbishop Langton, which concluded with John's atrocious treatment of some prisoners for the purpose of frightening Pandulf. In 1214 they give John's submission to Pandulf and the words of his homage. In recording the expulsion of Louis in 1217 they notice that at the Fair of Lincoln only one soldier in the train of Earl Ferrars was slain. In 1225 they give a complete copy of Henry III.'s re-issue of the Great Charter, with Ralf Blundeville, Earl of Chester, and William Ferrars, Earl of Derby, among the witnesses, and of the Charter of the Forests. In 1235 they give the statutes of Merton; in fact, few documents of constitutional and ecclesiastical importance are missing up to nearly the end of the reign. The Pope's frequent demands for money from King, nation, clergy, and monasteries, the answers made stating the grievances and objections, Bishop Grostete's bold stand against Papal appointments, and all the incidents connected with the provisions of Oxford are given at great length. It is made abundantly clear that King and Pope played into one another's hands in the game of extracting money from the Church and the monasteries. There are many documents relating to the troubles of the Christians in the Holy Land. Many interesting details are given of the Council of Lyons in 1245, including the remarkable account of the Tartars which was presented to the Council by the "Archbishop of Russia." The Abbot of Burton was summoned to the Council, and the account given in the annals of his Abbey implies that he attended. Articles of inquiry before the justices itinerant, which are given in full, throw strong light on the social habits of the time, as the articles of inquiry into the monasteries do on the state of the religious houses. Many details are given of Henry III.'s foolish attempt to gain the crown of Sicily for his son Edmund, and there is a full account of the coronation of Richard of Cornwall at Aix-la-Chapelle as King of the Romans in 1257. The jealousy which the older monastic orders felt against the friars is shown in the accounts which are given of the disputes of the Dominicans with the University of Paris in 1258 and the favour shown by the same order to the Jews in the case of the martyrdom of St. Hugh of Lincoln, and of the complaints which were brought against them of usurping the functions of the parish priests. Henry III.'s pilgrimage to Pontigny in 1254 with the brilliant reception he met with from St. Louis is fully described, as is also the crucifixion of St. Hugh in 1235.

The independent standpoint of the Burton annalist has already been mentioned. Some of the constitutional documents he has preserved in full are also found elsewhere, but many are found in his pages only. In the matter of St. Hugh of Lincoln he varies in two particulars from the ordinary account. He says the friars who tried to save the Jews were Dominicans, whereas Matthew Paris says they were Franciscans, and he attributes the escape of the Jews to the intervention of Richard of Cornwall, whom they had heavily bribed. It is he who tells us of a clever expedient which the Pope's emissaries adopted for persuading the English clergy to supply him with money. In 1240 the legate hit upon the plan of dealing with the clergy in detail. He first attacked the clergy of Berkshire, but in their objections, the Burton annalist says, the clergy of England acquiesced. Again, in the story of the provisions of Oxford the Burton annalist, differing from the usual monastic chroniclers, betrays no bias on the side of the barons. On the contrary, his constitutional feeling is shown by the appeal against them which, he says, was made by the "*communitas bachelerie Angliæ*," just as in the account of the protest against the Papal demand in 1255 he had used the remarkable expression "*populus major et minus*."

Together with such important public matters there are, also, of course, many details of purely local interest. The succession of the Abbots of Burton is naturally given, and various details concerning the Bishop of the Diocese and the great local magnates, the Earl of Chester and Earl Ferrars. Meteors and miracles, famines, fires and earthquakes, severe frosts, storms and floods, come in for notice; and the capture in the Trent of a large sturgeon eight feet long is recorded in 1255. Under the year 1256 there is a long account of an investigation before the Sheriff and a jury chosen from both Staffordshire and Derbyshire to decide the responsibility of repairing the bridge over the Trent at Egginton. News of the fortunes of other abbeys was probably brought by visiting monks. Information about the Crusades would be plentiful in a district under the influence of men like the Earl of Chester and Bertram de Verdun. Articles of inquiry before justices and by the Bishop would be brought back by the representative commissioned by the Abbey.

The chronicle of such an Abbey as Croxden is very different in character. It records some events of national interest, such as various incidents in the struggles in the reign of Henry III., and some of ecclesiastical interest, such as the adoption in the diocese in 1250 of the antiphon *salve Regina* ordered by the Pope in 1239, the appointment of Bishops and Archbishops, and the summoning of the Cistercian Abbots to the General Chapters of the order

at Cîteaux. In 1274 Abbot Howton went to attend the general chapter, and died at Dijon, being buried at Cîteaux. In 1308 the Abbot refused to attend, and was deposed. But most of the information is solely concerned with the private fortunes of the secluded Abbey, far removed from the busy haunts of men and the traffic of the world. We read of an unusually plentiful harvest in 1288, when sufficient carts could not be obtained, an earthquake shock in 1301 which terrified the monks in their Refectory, the burning of the Abbey wood at Cheadle in 1303, a cattle plague in 1319, and a great storm in 1372 which flooded the church and blew the roof off the dormitory. The church was built by Abbot John of London, who had been Prior of Stratford in Essex, and was dedicated in 1253. He also built Chapter House, refectory, kitchen, dormitory, infirmary, &c. His successor, who was elected in 1268, built the Abbot's House, and added to the library a great Bible in nine volumes. The west wing was built by John de Billysdon in 1288. It fell down in 1369 and had to be re-built. A London house was purchased by William de Over, who was elected in 1297. and who much increased the library. The first bell was hung in 1302. In 1313 the monks engaged Master Henry Michael de Lichfield to cast another to replace one which had been cracked. We are told he laboured throughout the summer and then his casting failed, but he succeeded by All Saints' Day. From 1331 to 1334 much building to repair the damage done by a great storm in December, 1330, is recorded. The Abbey pool was made in 1336, but ten years later it burst. The burials of the Verduns are carefully chronicled—John in 1274, Thomas in 1309, Matilda in 1312. On this latter occasion there was great pomp, and the Earl of Lancaster and other notables attended. Joanna, the last of the Verduns, was buried in 1334 before the high altar, the Abbots of Burton, Dieulacres, and Hulton being present.

The difference in the character and contents of the two chronicles from which we have quoted well exemplifies the difference between the characters and interests of the two houses which produced them, and the difference between the two orders to which the houses belonged.

In a large Abbey like that at Burton the Scriptorium must have been a busy place. Some books might be bought, like the annotated Bible in nine volumes. which Abbot William de Howton bought for Croxden for 50 marks. But the greater number would be of home production. The first Abbot of Croxden himself copied out the greater part of the Bible. The artist and the antiquary, the genealogist, the student of economic and social life, as well as the historian, owe an incalculable debt of gratitude to the literary labours of the monks.

CHAPTER VIII. ECCLESIASTICAL.

Something was said in an earlier chapter of the relations between the Austin Canons and the parish churches, and it has been made plain from various facts already mentioned that many livings came into the hands of the religious houses. In such cases the greater tithes went to the Monastery, only the lesser tithes remaining to the incumbent. This meant loss not only to the Vicar but also to the parish, and was a cause of much friction.

In the 12th century the Priory of Stone employed an agent to buy up livings. Twenty-four parishes were absorbed by monastic bodies in the time of Bishop Norbury (1322-1359). Like Archbishop Peckham earlier, he tried to make the religious houses appoint resident vicars.

It appears that in the diocese of Lichfield some check was attempted to be placed on the monastic appropriation of livings by insisting on the necessity of obtaining the sanction of the Cathedral Chapter as well as of the Bishop. For instance, in 1265, there was an arrangement with the Dean and Chapter and the Priory of St. Thomas, Stafford, respecting the tithes of Dilhorne, and at the end of the same century we find an arrangement made by the same body with the Prior of Stone respecting Bradley Church. The Dean and Chapter were not always compliant. In 1300 Pope Boniface VIII. issued a commission to the Prior of Coventry to adjudicate in a dispute between them and the Prior of Ronton respecting the tithes of Adbaston, which was of some years' standing: there had been an arrangement in 1272, but it had proved unsatisfactory. The granting of the requisite sanction was sometimes facilitated by resort to pecuniary inducements. St. Thomas, Stafford, gave an annual pension of 10 marks to the Dean and Chapter from the revenues of the Church of Stowe, and one of 20d. as an acknowledgement of the Chapter's permission for the impropriation of Weston-on-Trent.

The Priory of Stone possessed the rectory of Stone, worth £39 a year, Madeley, and Milwich, besides an annual pension of £2 from the Rector of Swynnerton and £1 from the Rector of Checkley. The pension was not always readily paid and sometimes excommunication had to be threatened to enforce it, as occurred in the case of the Rector of Swynnerton in 1279. The Rector of Madeley paid a mark. In the reign of Henry III. there was strife between the parishioners of Stone and the Priory about the payment of tithes, and it was formally agreed that all parishioners, freemen, and villains

alike should pay two farthings and four oblations yearly. In 1290 the Abbot of Croxden sued the parson of Cheadle for taking the Abbey corn at Cheadle, but the defence was that only tithes belonging to the Church had been taken. In the Burton Chartulary we find the decision of an ecclesiastical court in 1237 respecting the tithes of Ilam: the Vicar was to pay one mark annually to the Abbey of Burton, as well as the ordinary synodals. He received all the profits of the Church of Ilam except the tithes, but nothing from the dependent chapels of Scene, Okeover, and Cauldon.

Not content with the Great Tithes, the monks are found attempting to take the lesser tithes also. The monks of Burton did this in the case of Thorp, but the Rector there, Master Richard de Lavington, obtained Papal authorization to implead them for it. The particular dispute was over the lesser tithes (*super minutis decimis*) of Huncingdon. The monks were clearly in the wrong, for they eventually had to agree to pay Richard 5 marks down and 2 marks a year afterwards.

In 1464 the Prior of Tutbury sued a vicar for twelve marks, arrears of an annual sum of 33 shillings and four pence, tithes, which it was asserted went to the Priory. The Vicar steadily held out, and so long afterwards as 1482 the claim had not been discharged and the Prior is found suing the next incumbent for the old debt. At the end of the reign it was still unpaid.

In the competition for appropriations and tithes which went on between the religious houses there was keen rivalry. St. Thomas, Stafford, attempted in 1278 to obtain the Church of Stone, and sought to get Bishop Longsword on their side by submitting the matter to his arbitration. But Stone retaliated by appealing to the Dean and Chapter with a gift of 10 marks. In the same century there was a dispute between Kenilworth Priory, on behalf of its dependent house at Stone, and St. Remigius, on behalf of Lapley, about the tithes of Shefford. Ultimately, they were taken from Lapley and bestowed on Stone, but in 1368 there were further disputes about the same subject. The competition between Ronton and the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield for the tithes of Adbaston called for the intervention of Pope Boniface VIII. in 1301, although Honorius III. had given them to the Dean in 1224, confirming Bishop de Nonant's action in 1192.

In 1389 the Priory of St. Thomas, Stafford, received from Robert de Ferrars a grant from the revenues of the rectory of Weston, which was to vary with the number of canons: "*Dictus Dominus Robertus voluit et ordinavit quod dicti canonici claustrales in ecclesia Beati Thome Martyris die ac nocte percipiant et habeant annuatim quinquaginta et duos solidos de fructibus dictæ ecclesiæ de Weston in*

perpetuum, videlicet unaquaque die Mercurii per annum per se duodecim denarios ad augmentacionem sue pictancie in refectorio, prout tempus aut necessitas exquirat, et non alibi nisi dictis claustralibus; et si numerus canonicum augeatur tunc summa denariorum secundum numerum canonicorum augeatur, et non obstante quin dictis canonicis de coquina serviatur de grosso et de pictancia secundum cursum et consuetudinem domus illo die prout tempus exquirat et omnia ista predicta in perpetuum fideliter observanda sine aliqua fraude, Frater Nicholas de Huxton, Prior dictæ domus etc concesserunt." The allowance of food (*pictancia*) from the kitchen every Thursday is to be suitable to the season of the ecclesiastical year (*prout tempus*), and if the number of the canons is increased the allowance is to be correspondingly increased. Moreover, in 1409, the Bishop ordered that it was to be paid "*in Refectario seu Infirmaria prout tempus aut necessitas exquirat.*" Of course, it was always supposed, when rectories and tithes were appropriated, that sufficient income was left for the incumbent. When the parish church of Hulton was annexed to the Abbey (1368) it was ordered that a suitable portion of its profits should be reserved for a resident vicar.

The Cistercian order at first discountenanced the appropriation of livings, and doubtless this was one of the causes of the favour with which it was welcomed. Later, however, it followed the fashion of the rest, and from Leek and its chapels Dieulacres derived an annual revenue of £28.

Doubtless on many of the manors belonging to the religious houses there were chantries with resident chaplains. These are found holding land on their own account, and farming it. Ailwin the priest, who was chaplain on the estate at Stapenhill in the latter part of the twelfth century, had a son named Vincent. In times of disorder the post of chaplain to a lonely chantry was not an enviable one. The canons of Rocester had to withdraw the priest, Godfrey Spigurnel, who served a chantry of theirs on the Watling Street, for two months in 1320, as he was robbed.

Some monastic endowments of parish priests mentioned in the Burton Surveys are as follows:—

"*In Lega sunt de terra Warlanda viii. [bovatæ] quietæ ad Ecclesiam. Porro de hiis quæ sunt ad malam tenet Godfridus viii. bovatæ pro viiis. præter illam quæ ad Ecclesiam jacet quam tenet cum Ecclesia ad opus fratris sui parvuli, cum ad id etatis venerit ut possit et debeat servire ipsi Ecclesiae.*"

"*In Wilintona Godricus Presbiter tenet i. bovatam et partem prati ad Ecclesiam.*" The Chaplain at Horninglow had a burgage.

There are several mentions of glebe. "*Item in Flum habemus ecclesiam et terram ad eam facientem, idest i. carrucatam terræ et preter hanc xviii.*"

acras in tribuscroftis et adhuc partem terræ quæ vocatur Hageneleia."

Another method of paying the parish priest is indicated in the following:—

"Ego Galfridus Abbas et Monachi Burtonienses mecum concedimus huic Ailwino presbitero filio Ailwini iiii. bovatas terræ in Stapehulla etc. Concedimus quoque ei capellariam ecclesiæ in elemosina ad serviendum parrochie etc et habebit de curia pabulum et prebendam ad unum equum et hospitium extra portam monasterii, sicut habuit pater suus ut sollerti cura expleat officium suum etc."

"Ailwin our Chaplain" at Stapenhill is mentioned in the Surveys as well as *"Robert the priest,"* there. In the time of Abbot Richard (1182–1188) we read *"Ralf our clerk (clericus)"* at the same place.

Both lessees and rent-paying tenants often paid tithes. For instance, in the Burton Surveys it is noted that at Hampton in Blithfield Ralf Fitz Urnoi holds one carucate *"pro servitio corporis sui,"* and Suit of Court, and it proceeds:—*"Ipse autem Radulphus concessit eidem Ecclesiæ decimam suam in Neuton de toto dominio suo sive in segete sive in pecore et pro ipsa decima debet dare xis. quoque anno ad festivitatem Sanctæ Moduennæ Virginis."* *"Terram hujus manerii (Pothlac) habet Gaufridus in fedfirmam pro xis. quoque anno et per servitia condecencia corporis sui, et debet dare rectam decimam omnium segetum ejusdem manerii."*

"In Stanton habemus unam carucatam terræ quam tenet Gaufridus de Clintona pro xs. et dat decimam ejusdem terræ." *"Hoc manerium [i.e., Willington] tenet Aluredus de Cumbrai pro xxxs. et pro decima terræ in omnibus rebus. Debet etiam dare decimam equarum suarum ubicunque morentur."* *"Hanc terram [i.e., Stanton] tenet Gaufridus de Clintona pro xs. et dat decimam ejusdem terræ."*

Non-payment of tithes often called forth excommunication or other ecclesiastical censures, as Chaucer's oft-quoted passage reminds us. Such weapons were easily drawn, but their edge was dulled by too-frequent use.

Bishop Norbury is found threatening ecclesiastical censures against some men who had injured the Prior of Sandwell's property and tenants, and against those who had assaulted a friar at Lichfield. It was, perhaps, a more legitimate use of the spiritual weapon to excommunicate a Frenchman who had intruded himself as Prior of Lapley in 1334. In the same year the Prior of Tutbury was captured on the way home from visiting the Bishop, and the offenders were solemnly cursed from the altar.

Besides disputes about the tithes, there were other differences with the parish priests. In 1302 there was a dispute between St. Thomas, Stafford, and the Rector of Weston about the boundaries of the parishes of Weston and Stowe.

There were differences with lay patrons, too. In 1290 there was a dispute between the Abbey of Rochester and Robert de Staunton about the presentation to Waterfall, Robert claiming the right on the ground that his ancestor Colibinus had presented Henry, his clerk, deceased. In 1230 there was a dispute between John des Parles and the Prior of Sandwell about the advowson of the church of Handsworth, and the right was divided between the two claimants. In the same year the Prior of Tutbury was sued for prosecuting a suit about an advowson in the Court Christian in violation of the King's prohibition. He asserted he had not sued for the advowson, but for tithes. In 1297 Burton Abbey was involved in litigation about the advowson of the church of Leigh.

In 1323 a case was tried before the Royal justices at York between the Abbot of Burton and John de Clinton concerning the advowson of Austrey, about which there had long been difficulty, the Clintons desiring to regain the right of presentation. They failed to do so, for the Abbot was able to prove conclusively that his predecessor had lawfully received the advowson in the reign of Henry III.

In the next reign the Bishop of Ely, whose *locus standi* is not evident, claimed the advowson, asserting that there had been a collusive verdict in the previous case. The Abbot had certainly remitted the damages to which he was entitled, but there was no ground for the Bishop's assertion, and his suit failed.

Endowments of masses and lights helped to the maintenance of the houses. In the Ronton Chartulary we find: *Conventio inter fratrem Thomam Priorem, etc., et Willielmum filium Robertide Wirleye, scilicet quod predictus Willielmus dedit, etc., tres solidos annuallis redditus ad luminare sustentandum, etc., in conspectu imaginis Beate Mariæ Virginis, etc.* An earlier document is as follows:—"Ego Prior de Ronton etc., concedo Johanni Doylli et Roes uxori suae et heredibus eorum totam candelam quae die Purificationis Beatae Mariæ oblata fuerit in capella sua de Rontone infra curia sua, sita de se et de libera familia sua, exceptis omnibus parochianis dictorum Prioris et Conventus, etc." Gifts and offerings continued to be a profitable source of income. When Dieulacres leased the manor of Pulton it included tithes, and even oblations, but not "offerings of silver and wax offered before the image of the Blessed Mary."

Besides the Image of St. Modwen at Burton-on-Trent there were other places where cures were wont to be sought, such as the holy well of St. Erasmus at Ingestre, where William Chetwynd built and endowed a chapel so late as the reign of Henry VII. But the chief place of pilgrimage was, of course, the Shrine of St. Chad in Lichfield Cathedral, which Henry VIII.'s Commissioners reported as worth £400 in yearly "rent." It stood behind the High Altar and was glorious with gold and jewels.

In the Sacrist's Roll of the fourteenth century it is stated to be worth two thousand pounds. Besides the bones in the shrine, the other relics of the Saint included the head, kept in the Chapel over the Sacristy in the South Choir aisle, one of the arms enclosed in a separate receptacle and offered to pilgrims to kiss on St. Chad's Day, and certain bones contained in a portable shrine which was at times carried about the diocese. There were many other relics, including some of the "wood *quod plantavit dominus et dicitur Coket*," which has been conjectured to mean Jonah's Gourd, though Old Testament relics are unusual, and a relic of St. Wulfhad one of King Wulfere's martyred sons, who owed their churchmanship to St. Chad. The priceless volume called "St. Chad's Gospels" is still in the possession of the Cathedral.

In connection with Lichfield Cathedral there was a "Fraternity of the brethren and sisters of St. Chad," including among its members "religious" as well as "secular" clergy, besides lay people. The brethren in priests' orders were bound to say certain masses for past and present members. In Burton Abbey a hundred such masses were said yearly; at Trentham sixty. In the fifteenth century the total number of such masses was nearly 2,500 a year.

In the exercise of charity the religious houses were probably more generous than discriminating, but it is uncongenial to criticize such conduct, just as it is impossible to withhold admiration from Abbot Leuric of Burton (ob. 1085), who despoiled the shrine of St. Modwen to feed the poor of the town in a time of famine.

St. Thomas, Stafford, had a hospital for the sick at Ashbourne, which was given to it in 1275 by Robert de Ferrars. At Burton, Abbot William (1200—1210) attempted to make definite arrangements *ad sustentacionem pauperum et peregrinum*.

In the Ronton chartulary there are records of various gifts *ad sustentacionem pauperum*. "*Ego Richardus dominus de Flotesbroc dedi Deo et domui Beate Annæ site infra limite Prioratus Beate Mariæ de Rontone, ad sustentacionem pauperum ibidem commorantium, etc.*" At the dissolution there were eight bedesmen at Dieulacres. As we have already seen, both Burton and Stone found themselves in financial straits through the frequent calls on their charity and hospitality. The almoner (*elemosinarius*) was an important official upon whose discretion much depended.

There was constant interference on the part of the Crown in the affairs of the religious houses. On the death of an Abbot or Prior two of the monks or canons had to report the vacancy to the royal officials and obtain the royal licence to elect a successor. During the vacancy the temporalities were

taken over and administered by the King's escheater. The election had to be notified to the Crown and the royal assent formally obtained. Restitution was then made of the temporalities and notification sent to the Bishop that he might proceed to the appointment. In case of a disputed election the choice was taken out of the hands of the inmates. For instance, in 1329 there was a disputed election on the death of the Abbot of Burton (William Bromley). On receipt of the royal licence some chose Roger de Bilyngton the Sacristan, while others elected Robert de Longdon, the Prior of Tutbury, and both candidates presented themselves in person to obtain the royal assent. A mandate was accordingly issued to the Bishop of Lichfield to examine into and settle the dispute, which he did by quashing the whole election and appointing Robert de Longdon. In 1365 there was a disputed election at S. Thomas, Stafford, and the Bishop decided between the rival candidates.

The royal supervision did not, however, make for real efficacy or spirituality, and, of course, it was steadily minimised by the Papacy.

When the French differences broke out, the Royal power took advantage of the opportunity to step in and increase its control. In 1335 Edward III. appointed to a prebend which the Prior and four brethren of Sandwell claimed, but they made but half-hearted objection. In 1359 the King exercised the right of presentation to the vicarage of Dove-ridge, the priory of Tutbury being in his hands by reason of the French war. In 1376 he presented to Marston for a similar reason. Tutbury never again was dependent on St. Peter sur Dive, though in 1362 William Beloc, a monk of St. Peter sur Dive, was appointed prior on the nomination of the lords who had the honour of Tutbury by grant of the Duke of Lancaster. Again, in 1377, Philip Bellocier, a monk of St. Peter sur Dive of the Priory of Tutbury, was appointed prior on the presentation of John of Gaunt. In 1378 the King appointed to the vicarage of Lapley, and again in 1383. In 1361 a monk of Rheims was appointed prior of the house at Lapley on the presentation of the Abbot of St. Remigius.

The exemption which the religious houses claimed from episcopal control is usually put forward as a prime cause of their continued degeneration. But it must be borne in mind that in its origin the "privilege" was a definite effort to ensure strictness. The Bishops were usually politicians, fully engrossed in secular business, and without the time or the inclination to supervise the monasteries. Moreover, they were often seculars, which would make them inconvenient visitors of "regular" houses. They were of course, frequently changing, and this often meant change of policy. A "regular" Bishop would be succeeded by a secular, and a secular by a regular,

each with different ideas and different aims. There was, therefore, no continuity. This explains how it was that Stephen Harding, the shrewd, practical, Englishman, considered it a wise measure to substitute for episcopal supervision over the Cistercians the authority of the parent house, and definitely appointed visitors, with the provision that all the Abbots should attend the General Chapters. In 1274 the Abbot of Croxden died while attending the General Chapter, and in 1308 the Abbot of the same house was deposed because he refused to attend. In 1367 the Abbot of Aunay sent a special commissioner to investigate the accounts of Croxden and to try to improve the position of the house. In the same way the Cluniac houses were indirectly under the control of the parent house of Clugny. In each case the object originally was to secure the effective external control which the Bishops had failed to provide.

Strong Bishops, especially when supported by strong Kings, made efforts to assert their authority; wise Popes also helped them.

In 1232 the Pope ordered a general visitation of the monasteries by the Archbishop, and in 1245 called on the Bishop to correct the Deans of Stafford and Tettenhall, who had abused their privileges. In 1259, as we have mentioned, a general inquiry into the monasteries was made. The way it was made and received is illustrated by what happened at Stafford. The Bishop, being repulsed by the Canons of the collegiate church, came with a band of armed retainers and broke open the doors. The Dean was the son of Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, now the head of the reactionary party of the old baronage, and his championship of the canons frustrated the Bishop's efforts. The Bishop ex-communicated them and the Pope supported him. In 1280, Archbishop Peckham's attempts to exercise visitatorial powers at Stafford, and also at Wolverhampton, were similarly frustrated by the King's support of his "Royal free chapels." In the early years of the fifteenth century Abbot Sudbury, of Burton, refused to appear when the Bishop summoned him to answer for his irregularities. In 1428 Bishop Heyworth had to be content with exercising a modified authority over the Cathedral Chapter, although he pleaded Papal authorization. Where episcopal authority was successfully asserted, the gain went usually to the Pope. The Papal power was also advanced by the bulls and indulgences which Bishops and monks alike were glad to obtain. When a dispute arose between the Archdeacon of Derby and the Abbot of Burton, it was Pope Gregory who appointed the Prior of Tutbury and others to hear and determine the case.

In the Salt Library at Stafford is an original papal grant, dated 1341, bestowing upon Roger, Abbot of the monastery of our Blessed Lady at

Rocester, the privilege that in time of interdict "hit mot be lawfull to zow to sey or celebrate divine service with a stil voyce ye belies not rongen." In 1391 Calwich obtained a Papal indulgence for those who visited and contributed to the fabric on the feast of St. Margaret and certain other days.

In 1359 the Archbishop of Canterbury issued a commission to the Vicar-General of Lichfield to supervise all elections of Abbots, Priors, Abbesses, and Prioresses, with extensive powers of rejection. He was to receive from candidates a profession of canonical obedience to the Archbishop, and this was not a mere form. For instance, we have full details at this time of the election of the Prior of Ronton. The proceedings are formal and regular. The decree of election was produced; two of the electors were examined; the documents of election were inspected; a proclamation was formally made, and as no objector appeared the election of John Harcourt, Canon of the house, was confirmed. It has already been mentioned that the Bishop had the right of institution, and was usually empowered by the King to decide in case of a disputed election. Bishop Norbury found the Prior of Sandwell incapable and ordered him to be pensioned. He was to retain his rooms, and the commons of two brethren, together with *unum virgultum juxta cimiterium cum vivario et columbario*, which after his death were to serve *pro solatio fratrum in infirmario*.

In 1361 Bishop Stretton found the house at Kenilworth in an unsatisfactory state, and he summoned all its brethren, even those dwelling in cells belonging to the monastery, to attend his visitation. It is noticeable that he set forth that he had royal authorization for this action.

On Bishop Norbury's personal visitation of Rocester Priory he found that heavy debts had been incurred through the attempt to obtain possession of the impropriation of Woodford in Northamptonshire. He forbade the granting of corrodies and the keeping of *canes venatici*, but his injunctions were not observed. In 1334 he allowed the Prior of Kenilworth to re-call the Prior of Calwich, although he had been instituted to his office, and in the same year he excommunicated a Frenchman who had intruded himself as Prior of Lapley. In 1367 there occurs a good instance of the completeness of Bishop Stretton's authority over the monastic houses. In that year he made a visitation of the nunnery at Fairwell, and found various irregularities which caused him to issue the following orders:—The laudable practice of going for walks in common is commended, and none are to go out without two others for company, and then only by leave of the Prioress. The three-fold vow is to be observed, and also the periods of silence. Such secular women, except necessary servants, as are living within the

nunnery are to obtain the Bishop's licence or to be dismissed, and the same order is issued with regard to male children. The accounts are to be laid before the whole Convent yearly at least, and grants of land are to require the Bishop's authorization. There has been too much luxury, and all are ordered to take their meals in the Guest Hall, where, alone, except in cases of sickness or other reasonable cause, a fire is permissible. *

Pope Alexander took the Priory of Stone and its possessions under his authority, and Bishop Roger of Lichfield gave them freedom from all synodal customs, but he reserved canonical obedience to himself and his successors. From Bishop Richard they obtained the same immunities as the houses at Burton and Rocester, by payment of three shillings yearly. The Archbishop also gave his protection in 1223. In the difficulties caused by the Black Death the Bishop was frequently referred to. In 1361 Bishop Stretton was appealed to by Henry of Kidderminster, who found himself left sole inmate of Sandwell. He appointed him prior. In 1379, when Prior John of Kyngeston vacated the headship of the same house only two inmates remained—John and William of Dunstable. On another appeal to the Bishop, Richard of Westbury, a Benedictine, was appointed prior. The statutes against papal authority were only spasmodically enforced. In 1380 Richard Tudenham was arrested for having obtained a papal provision to the Priory of Sandwell contrary to the Statute of Provisors, and for having prosecuted suits in the Court Christian against Richard de Westbury, but such vigorous action was rare. In 1365 the Bishop appointed one of the Burton monks to the Priory of Breadsall, which was "desolate" through long vacancy and small revenue, on his promise to use his best efforts to restore its prosperity.

The founders and patrons of the religious houses appear to have frequently exercised the right of presentation with considerable authority. In 1224 William des Parles sued William Fitz-William for half the advowson of the Priory of Sandwell, of which he had been seised in the reign of King John. In 1242 there was a lawsuit between the Prior of Kenilworth and Robert de Stafford about the Priory of Stone: next year the latter agreed to confirm by charter all the rights his father had given to Stone.

On a vacancy occurring (1337) in the headship of the Priory of Tutbury through the resignation of Prior John of St. Albin, Henry Earl of Lancaster claimed the presentation, alleging that Prior John had been appointed on his nomination. The monks claimed the right of election, asserted that Prior John, though he had been nominated by Lancaster had been rejected and another elected, whose elec-

tion, however, had been set aside by the Abbot of the parent house of St. Peter super Divam. Against this exercise of authority on the part of the parent house they had appealed to Rome. The suit was still pending, and they alleged that John had only resigned through conviction that judgment would be given against him. But they could not deny that Lancaster was patron of the house, and he won his case, and his nominee was ordered to be admitted by the Bishop. Even when the King appointed to Lancaster's houses the right of the patron was formally asserted. For instance, when Richard de Lavynden was elected Prior of Trentham by royal licence in 1297 a Memorandum is enrolled that Thomas of Lancaster lodged his claim to the advowson immediately afterwards. On the death of Lavynden (1321) Thomas of Lancaster asserted his claim and induced the Canons to elect Richard de Dulverne. Directly afterwards Lancaster fell, and Dulverne petitioned the King to allow his election. Edward II. insisted that the advowson had "always" belonged to the Crown, but he "pardoned" the Canons and allowed the election to stand on payment of a fine of 40 marks.

The right of sanctuary and the privilege of clergy were two customs easily open to abuse though not without features to commend them.

At the Stafford Assizes of 1227 it transpired that a murderer had taken sanctuary in one of the religious houses, subsequently acknowledging the deed and fleeing the kingdom. In 1260 a quarrel occurred between John de Chetwode and Philip de Mere. In the Priory of St. Thomas, Stafford, the latter's servants, having seized John, detained him by main force. In 1272 one of the servants of the Abbot of Rocester killed a man in a quarrel on Rocester bridge. He fled and was outlawed, the Abbot, with the *vills* of Rocester, Denstone, Combridge, and Quickshill, being put in *misericordia* for failing to bring him to law.

In the same year a monk of Canwell, William de Sutton, committed murder and fled. He was outlawed, and as he had no property of his own the prior of Canwell was fined a mark. In 1293 the Bishop, through the Prior of Stone, claimed to withdraw a man accused of being accessory to thefts by pleading privilege of clergy, a Canon of Trentham being charged as an accomplice. The man was found not guilty.

As regards admission to the religious houses, something has already been said. We have seen Edward I. claiming the right to appoint a monk at Dieulacres.

It was obviously natural for a father to make a gift to the house according to his means when his son took the religious habit, but such a grant as the following shows that it would be easy for such

a practice to lead to direct payment for admission :
"Omniſus filiis Sanctæ Matris Eccleſiæ etc. Rogerus filius Henrici de Halctona ſalutem. Noſcat Universitas Veſtra me concediſſe etc. Deo et Sanctæ Mariæ de Eſſartis etc totam terram cum manſura quam Richardus Wenthel tenet in Halctona etc pro anima Willielmi filii mei qui apud eos religionis habitus ſuſcepit etc." The date of this is the middle of the twelfth century. A hundred years afterwards Giles de Erdington obtained from the Priory of St. Thomas, Stafford, the right, for himſelf and his heirs, of "preſenting" a Canon of the Houſe to ſay Maſſ for his patrons, whoſe names were to be entered on the Obit Liſt of the houſe, ſo that they might be mentioned in the ſacred offices. The latter privilege was, of courſe, one which was commonly ſought. If the number of inmates ſo admitted was at all large they muſt have hardly contributed to the unity and harmony of the community. In 1294 the Prior of Stone was fined for illegally depriving a man of his Canon's habit and privileges. The man was aggrieved in much the ſame way as a Fellow of a College might be if he were deprived of his Fellowship.

The following incident is related in the Burton Chartulary :—A Burton carpenter named Simon, one of the Abbey's villains, had a ſon, Ralf, by his firſt wife, but, on his marrying again, the boy was not decently maintained (*non fuit ſuſtenatus decenter*) and his uncle, Robert the chaplain, took him into his care. Ralf was heir to the burgage his father owned in Burton, and when he was ordained, no doubt through the influence of his uncle, and probably with the help of the educational facilities given by the Abbey, he very naturally made it over to the latter, retaining, however, a life intereſt in the property. It ſhows that even a villain could obtain ordination.

As has already been mentioned, ſome of the Staffordſhire houſes were "cells," or ſmall dependent houſes under the control of larger houſes. Calwich was a "cell" to Kenilworth, Dudley to Wenlock, Ronton to Haughmond, Lapley to Rheims. Tutbury was dependent on St. Peter ſur Dive. Roceſter had cells at Halywell in Warwickſhire on the Watling Street, and at Lees in Staffordſhire. The latter was called St. Michael's. Such dependent houſes were often unſatisfactory. They were ſometimes looked upon as places of baniſhment for brethren who deſerved puniſhment: a method of diſcipline akin to the later ſystem of penal ſettlements like Botany Bay, and as likely to be productive of the very worſt reſults. Men thus removed from the ſuperviſion of the parent houſe would degenerate ſtill more, and the remedy would intensify the evil. In any caſe, ſuch ſmall communities would eaſily become engroſſed in ſecular purſuits: their intereſts were narrowed, and their occupation ſmall.

Disputes arose between the dependent cells and the parent house, as occurred in 1246 between Ronton and Haughmond. In this case the subject was apparently the amount payable yearly from the cell. The lesser house sought the support of the Bishop, but Bishop Weseham obtained the submission of both the disputants to his authority, and ordered Ronton to pay 100 shillings yearly to Haughmond.

The inmates of the cells became unpopular with their neighbours. In 1293 the dependence of Calwich on Kenilworth was made the excuse for depriving its Prior of pasture rights in the Wootton Woods, it being asserted that he was removable at the will of the Prior of Kenilworth, as, indeed, was strikingly shown to be the case in 1334, when the Prior, although duly instituted, was recalled by the Prior of Kenilworth. The Prior of Calwich in 1293 denied that such was the case, but the local jury, to whom the case was referred, decided against him. Local feeling was hostile to the Canons, much as it was afterwards against the alien Priories, and Calwich had to forego further rights of gallows and free warren, &c. in the manor of Ellastone. The parent house did not relax its hold or lessen its claims at the bidding of a Staffordshire jury. In 1334 the Bishop inquired into the matter and decided in favour of Kenilworth. This apparently brought matters to a crisis, for in 1349 the four resident Canons pleaded that they could no longer endure the uncertainty of their position and the unpopularity they experienced. They succeeded in having their house declared independent, under the patronage of the original founders, who undertook to pay yearly a sum of 60 shillings to Kenilworth in acknowledgment of its rights.

The monks were charged with the duty of collecting the Convocation grants in turn. In 1382 the collectors for the Archdeaconry of Stafford were the Abbot and Convent of Croxden; in 1383, Ronton; in 1384, Rocester. The next turn fell to Calwich, but the Prior petitioned that they might be excused on the plea of infirmity and poverty, as well as of paucity of numbers. There were only two Canons, besides the Prior, which they alleged was their complement according to the terms of their foundation. Bishop Stretton acceded to the request and divided the work between Dieulacres and Croxden.

As collectors for the Pope, the monks shared the unpopularity which papal exactions always enjoyed. In 1331 the Abbot of Burton's servant was assaulted and robbed of £100 which he had collected for the Pope.

It would be interesting and valuable if we were able to estimate the part taken by the religious houses in providing clergy.

The following is an analysis of the ordinations in Lichfield Diocese to the subdiaconate, diaconate,

and priesthood to religious houses from 1360 to 1367. It may, perhaps, be taken as showing in some degree the relative activity of the various houses during these years, though the numbers must not be taken as absolute, for (1) it is not always clear whether the ordinand was ordained to the house or merely on a title given by the house for work elsewhere; and (2) of course the same name often appears in successive ordinations for three grades in turn. It will also be borne in mind (3) that whereas the Austin Canons were necessarily priests, this was not the case with the other orders; and (4) that the inmates of dependent cells were often provided by the superior house.

During the years named there were 73 ordinations to the Benedictine houses as follows:—To Burton, 37; Tutbury, 15; Sandwell, 13; Brewood Nunnery, 5; Lapley, 3; Fairwell Nunnery, 0; Cluniacs, 3; Canwell, 2; Dudley, 1; Cistercians, 64; Croxden, 33; Hulton, 25; Dieulacres, 6; Austin Canons, 169; Rocester, 44; St. Thomas, Stafford, 35; St. John's, Lichfield, 34; Trentham, 24; Ronton, 21; Calwich, 10; Stone, 1. During the same period 102 friars were ordained—55 to the house of the friars Minors at Lichfield, 23 to that of the friars preachers at Newcastle-under-Lyme, 12 to that of the friars Minors at Stafford, and the same number to the house of the Austin friars in the same town. Among the 23 at Newcastle-under-Lyme are four in 1362 (Lent), of whom it is noted that they "ought to be ordained deacons."

As indicating the period which intervened between the various steps to the priesthood the following particulars may be given:—Thomas de Lyndon (Sandwell), Henry Shadd (Rocester), and Thomas de Hulton (Hulton) were each ordained sub-deacon at Advent, 1360, deacon at Lent, 1361, and priest at Trinity following. Two Franciscans ordained sub-deacons at the same time as these are among those noted as "ought to be ordained deacons" in Lent, 1362, but there does not appear to be any record of their having been ordained priests in the diocese of Lichfield. John Prynne, of Hulton, was ordained sub-deacon at Trinity 1361, and deacon at the next Ember season. He became priest at the following Trinity ordination. Thomas de Walton, of the same house, was ordained to the two lower grades with Prynne, but he did not become a priest till Advent, 1364, when he had migrated to Holland in Lancashire. John de Bradeley, Rocester, was ordained sub-deacon at Trinity, 1361, but he then went to Tutbury and became deacon at Trinity, 1363, and priest in the autumn. In ordinary circumstances it appears that the successive grades were attained at successive ordinations.

CHAPTER IX.

DEGENERATION.

The degeneration of the religious houses, which ultimately proved the excuse if not the direct cause of their downfall, was of early growth.

Their position as great landowners made them inevitably affected by the course of politics. The national history was bound to have its influence on the history and character of the monks. This soon began to be evident.

The reign of Henry III., though it saw the coming of the friars to Staffordshire—Grey Friars to Lichfield and Stafford, and Black Friars to Newcastle—was full of demoralizing influences, which increased as time progressed. The house of the Austin Friars at Stafford was founded by Ralf Baron of Stafford in the time of Edward III.

Earl Ralf of Chester, whom we saw founding Dieulacres and bestowing gifts on other houses, loyally supported young Henry. With William Earl Ferrars he fought on the King's side at the "Fair of Lincoln." He stood aside without putting forward the claims he might have urged, and allowed the Earl Marshal to take the Regency. He made matters easier by going in the Damietta Crusade. On his return he maintained an independent attitude, and though he did not hesitate to oppose Hubert de Burgh when he judged it to be necessary, and even joined the foreign party in 1223-4, his chivalrous nature made him protect the fallen justiciar from the violence of his meaner foes. His death in 1232, coming just at the same time as the fall of Hubert, made easier the influx of foreign favourites which he and Hubert alike had opposed, though from dissimilar motives. He left no children, and his vast domains were divided. The Chester earldom went to his nephew, and within a few years was appropriated as a provision for the heir apparent. His Lancastrian estates went to his brother-in-law, William de Ferrars, Earl of Derby. The Manor of Rocester, with the manorial rights, was given to the Abbot and Canons of the Abbey there.

The Annals of Burton during the whole of the reign record a constant series of exactions from the monasteries on the part of Pope and King, and the maintenance of an equally constant opposition to the attempts of both. They show also how the two mercenary powers were ready enough to play into one another's hands when occasion served, and how all kinds of inducements and expedients were used by each in turn for the purpose of extorting money. First bribery was tried, then pretence of

reform, then bullying. In 1224 the King obtained a grant in return for the issue of the Charters. Burton-on-Trent paid DCCC. marks, and in 1226 obtained from the King an extensive Charter of Liberties.

In 1229 the Pope took a tithe from all the clergy. The Assessment of Burton for its contribution of £4 19s. is given with very great detail, for the tithe had to be paid under penalty of excommunication. In 1232 the Pope issued a Bull ordering a general visitation of all monasteries, alleging "*quod monasteria cantuariensis provincie in spiritualibus enormiter et in temporalibus graviter per malitiam et injuriam in eisdem habitantium sunt collapsa.*" an accusation the gravity of which may probably be discounted by a consideration of the circumstances under which it was made. It was desired to weaken the religious houses.

In 1240 all the heads of religious houses were summoned to London to meet the Legate Otho. He demanded a tallage, to which Abbot Laurance of Burton paid 30 marks. In the same year Otho tried to induce Bishop Grostete to admit to a benefice a son of Earl Ferrars, who was under age and not ordained. In 1242 the King persuaded Archbishop Rich to try to induce the Cistercians to waive their claim to exemption from taxation. They refused, and Henry tried to negotiate with the General Chapter of the Order at Citeaux, to which no English Abbots were allowed to go that year.

In 1246 fresh papal claims roused a strong protest, setting forth very plainly the scandalous way in which Pope and King had supported one another in extorting money from the clergy, urging the hard straits to which such exactions were reducing the monasteries, and hinting not only at political revolution but even at religious schism. So outspoken a protest caused a cessation of exactions for a time, and in the interval Pope Innocent IV. retaliated on the Abbot of Burton by issuing a mandate restraining him from dealing with matrimonial and other causes. Again the Royal and Papal extortioners made common cause. In 1254 the Pope gave the King a tenth of ecclesiastical property (*exceptis ordine Cisterciensi*), and in the next year when the clergy raised a strong opposition to the demands of the Legate Rustand, who had obtained blank letters addressed to any monastery he liked to collect money for the Pope, the King supported his fellow pillager. It was well said that the action of the Pope and King was as though shepherd and wolf should join to ravage the flock. Full and elaborate directions are given as to the manner in which the tithes are to be collected and paid; they were to be enforced from all religious houses, great and small, "*nullis exceptis*," under the most severe penalties. Next year Rustand

demanding from the Cistercians the whole of the year's wool for Pope and King, and again the latter supported him.

Such experience as this could not fail to have a demoralizing effect, and the Articles of Enquiry in Religious Houses which the Burton Annals incorporate under the year 1259 imply that abuses in plenty existed. They suggest not only that the Rule is not properly observed, the offices not carefully performed, and internal quarrels not unknown; but point also to graver dangers. They indicate the growth of a secular spirit and a fondness for unseemly relaxations. The monks mix too freely with the world; the gates are not regularly closed at the appointed time; the duties of hospitality and charity are not always properly observed; there are suggestions of simony, and of female company other than is meet. As the years pass, all these evils, and others, inevitably increased, but the mischievous influence of the reign of Henry III. must have had a great share in developing them.

Not that the monks were not meanwhile conferring many benefits upon the country, at any rate of a material nature. The services they rendered to agriculture and the development of the land have already been mentioned. The town of Burton-on-Trent grew up beside the Abbey walls, ministering to its wants, sharing its prosperity, and profiting by the noble visitors who came there with large retinues of servants and retainers. The church at Burton was begun in 1114. Abbot Nicholas (1188-1197) built the first street. Abbot Melbourne (1200-1214) extended the town between the two bridges. Abbot Packington (1281-1305), at the time of a great famine, grappled with the problem of unemployment by building a new street. Abbot Melbourne (1200-1214) obtained from King John the grant of a three days' Fair at Burton, and Henry III. confirmed it to Abbot Richard de Insula in 1226. It was held at the time of the Feast of St. Modwen, July 4. Henry III. also gave the Abbot of Burton a Fair at Bromley at the Feast of St. Bartholomew. The Prior of Stone obtained from Edward I. a Fair for the town which was growing up round the Priory there. The first Abbot of Diculacres confirmed the liberties of the "free burgesses" at Leek.

The services of Burton Abbey to the town continued to the end. Abbot William Matthewe, who resigned in 1430, paved the upper part of the town and made a causeway before the Abbey Gate. Abbot Ownesby, who succeeded him, built a stone conduit in the market-place. Abbot Thomas de Felde (1474-1494) built a great hall in the market-place. Abbot William Bone (or Beyne) founded the Grammar School in the early years of the sixteenth century.

Under such circumstances the monks and canons were by no means unpopular in the towns. St. Thomas's Priory at Stafford had been founded on land given by one of the burgesses, Gerard de Stafford, "*Deo et Sanctæ Mariæ et Beato Thomæ Martyri et canonicis Deo et Sancto Thomæ regulariter servientibus*," and in the Welsh wars of Edward I. special exemption was granted to the Prior for a cart to carry his corn from his manor of Stafford to the Priory, while most means of transport were pressed into the King's service. The Prior and Canons of Ronton were made free of all liberties and customs of Stafford. When, however, the townsmen thought their trade was being interfered with, they became restive. Early in Henry III.'s reign there were complaints from the burgesses of Stafford, Lichfield, and Tutbury about the Abbot of Burton's fairs at Burton and Abbots Bromley, and in 1281 "the King had to take the Friars Minors of Stafford under his protection from the common hucksters 'who daily aggrieved them in the town and county of Stafford.'"¹ In 1282 a royal licence was granted them to buy without molestation of the King's ministers, as it appeared by their complaint that certain regrators in the town and county of Stafford prevented them from purchasing their daily victuals, and at times even snatched what they had bought out of their hands. The monks, as we have seen, were money-lenders and life-insurance agents, by means of the corrodies they sold, and sometimes their business transactions were more than questionable. In 1457 the Prior of St. Thomas', Stafford, was sued for £10 damages in connection with horse-dealing, having sold a horse *sciens equum illum in varias infirmitates collapsum et ad laborandum impotentem*. Bishop Norbury (1322-58) promulgated his ban against men who had assaulted a friar at Lichfield. In the country districts the business transactions of the "religious" were less disturbing, and of course were the means of giving occupation to a considerable number of people, just as the wealth which accrued to them made them useful to the Government. Some of the Staffordshire houses did a brisk and regular trade with foreign merchants. Croxden, Dieulacres, Rocester, and Burton are mentioned in a Flemish list of the latter part of the 13th century, and the same houses were among those which are noted as supplying wool to the Florentine markets in a list dated 1315. The wool from Burton is described in the latter list as *in Torcea*. This is probably the same as wool *de marisco*, which was usually classed separately from the rest. *Torcea* appears to mean a dyke or embankment, and the Burton sheep probably pastured on the low ground by the Trent, which was secured from inundation by means of embankments. The Staffordshire wool was among the best in England. A fair price

throughout the country at this time was nine marks the sack, but the Staffordshire wool was worth thirteen and twelve marks. Shropshire and parts of Lincolnshire alone produced a better quality. When Edward II. led his army against Scotland in 1310 the following supplies were exacted from the Staffordshire houses :—

	Wheat. Qrs.	Oats. Qrs.	Oxen.	Sheep.	Malt. Qrs.
Benedictines :—					
Burton ..	60 ..	100 ..	10 ..	50 ..	60
Tutbury ..	40 ..	60 ..	10 ..	50 ..	50
Cistercians :—					
Croxden ..	40 ..	100 ..	20 ..	60 ..	0
Dieulacres	40 ..	50 ..	20 ..	60 ..	0
Hulton ..	40 ..	100 ..	20 ..	60 ..	0
Augustinians :—					
Stone	40 ..	100 ..	10 ..	60 ..	0
Rocester .	12 ..	20 ..	3 ..	20 ..	0
Stafford ..	30 ..	60 ..	6 ..	30 ..	0
Trentham	12 ..	60 ..	4 ..	30 ..	0
Ronton ..	20 ..	30 ..	6 ..	30 ..	0
Cluniacs :—					
Dudley ..	20 ..	60 ..	6 ..	30 ..	0

Edward III. also utilized the monastic wool merchants of the county in characteristic fashion, by exacting 800 sacks of wool from Staffordshire at a low price and then failing to pay it. In 1379 Richard II. borrowed largely for the war with France. Loans were obtained from all sorts of people, Lords, Bishops, Knights, commoners, "the good men" of many towns, and, of course, the religious houses. The Abbot of Burton lent 20 marks and the Abbot of Croxden 100 shillings. The list of seventy towns from which Richard II. borrowed money in 1397 includes Burton-on-Trent, though the sum obtained from it was only £13 6s. 8d., less even than was lent by Lichfield (£20), which is the only other Staffordshire town mentioned.

Their political importance drew the religious into political disputes, as we have already seen in the case of Bishop Roger de Meyland and the son of Richard de Clare. Robert de Ferrars in the same reign had inherited from his father a tradition of loyalty to the King. He married a daughter of Hugh XI. of Lusignan, one of the leaders of the locust flights of foreigners who were preying on England. In the Parliament of 1265 there was a fierce quarrel between him and Simon de Montfort, and he was imprisoned. Being released by Prince Edward, he found the latter's policy no more to his liking than Simon de Montfort's had been. He raised a revolt in his own territories in 1266, and was defeated at Chesterfield, his earldom being transferred to Prince Edmund, Earl of Lancaster; the family of Ferrars was reduced to its ancient estate of Chartley, and sank into the ranks of the minor baronage. Earl Robert remained

powerless for real harm, but disaffected and troublesome, and the Prior of Hulton suffered from his depredations in 1275. He was buried at the Austin Priory at Stafford.

Tutbury had been transferred with the rest of the Lancastrian estates, and in the revolt of Thomas of Lancaster in the reign of Edward II. the Abbot of the neighbouring house at Burton was seriously compromised. Hugh de Audley, the patron of Hulton, opposed the Dispensers. He had married Gaveston's widow, Margaret, Gilbert Earl of Gloucester's sister, and on the death of Gilbert at Bannockburn he received part of his estates. With Thomas of Lancaster he helped to secure the downfall of the Dispensers in 1321. Two months later he felt the King's vengeance. Edward summoned a general levy and advanced northwards against the Earl of Lancaster, who, with Hugh de Audley, had been proclaimed a traitor. The Royal army had to cross the Trent at Burton, and Lancaster threw into the town a strong body of troops from his castle of Tutbury near by. When the King found the old narrow bridge thus strongly guarded, he made a detour of some miles, and effected a crossing at Walton, further up the river, and took Lancaster's troops in the rear. They fled precipitately. Tutbury Castle speedily surrendered, and three days afterwards Lancaster himself was captured and hurried to the block beneath the walls of his own castle of Pontefract. Audley, owing to his marriage with the King's niece, escaped with imprisonment. But meanwhile men were asking what had happened to the rich treasure chest which it was well known Lancaster had with him at Burton. It transpired on inquiry that the fugitive earl had left it in the charge of his treasurer, Leicester. Leicester narrowly escaped falling into the King's hands. He fled first to Tutbury, but Edward speedily followed him thither, and he had barely time to get away. While the King was battering at the gates of Tutbury Castle men said the treasurer and his prize were struggling with the swiftly-flowing river a few hundred yards away. This was the furthest that could then be discovered. Some said he had lost his charge in mid-stream. Some said he had sunk it of malice to deprive the King of the rich booty. Many averred that the monks of Burton knew more of the affair than they cared to own.

Justices were sent down to inquire into the matter, and the jury, which the monks asserted was purposely composed of their enemies, found that the Abbot had taken possession of goods belonging to the earl worth £300, and was therefore guilty of a serious crime. He and his brethren repaired to the King at Yoxall, and on oath denied the charge, but they had to go to London and give a full account of all they knew of the whole matter to the Chancellor. The Burton Chartulary contains the depositions of the

monks, apparently copied from their own memoranda, for they are given in French instead of the usual Latin. They owned to being in possession of many things which the earl had left behind him, some of which they asserted had been given to various monks, of whom Simon Bosworth and William Stoke are named. These being surrendered, a full pardon was granted, but still the treasure chest was not found. The monks were harried and examined for several years, and it was not till 1325 that they were finally exonerated from all blame in the matter. Five hundred years afterwards, on June 1, 1831, workmen who were clearing the millrace of the Dove some sixty yards below the bridge discovered a score or two of silver coins in the gravel bed of the river. A further search was instituted, and hundreds of coins, gold and silver, English, Scottish, and French, were brought to the surface. The discovery at least cleared the reputation of the monks.

Even in the case of the lesser houses we see how the fortunes of the religious establishments were affected by those of their patrons. In 1139, when the Earl of Chester was on Matilda's side, the Empress had nominated the Prior of Trentham, and in 1321 when the presentation was claimed by the Earl of Lancaster, and Richard de Dulverne was nominated Prior, Dulverne had to present a petition for pardon on Lancaster's execution directly afterwards. His election was confirmed on payment of a fine of 40 marks.

If the patron and the monastery quarrelled, as they sometimes did, much inconvenience could be caused to the latter.

In 1319, Alton Castle and the patronage of Croxden passed to the Furnivals. The new lord, Thomas de Furnival, levied many exactions on the Abbey. He insisted on daily distribution of alms, probably in the same spirit as the justices of Speenhamland in a later century—namely, to relieve himself of the necessity of maintaining his tenants. He required that his horses and hounds should be housed at the Abbey, and that his seven bailiffs should be entertained and fed once a week in a special room. There was naturally considerable friction, which was finally ended by a formal written agreement.

Independently of the influence of the public or private concerns of their patrons and founders, the position of the religious houses as owners of property exposed them to all the usual difficulties of landlords. Some of these have already been mentioned. In consequence, they were inevitably involved from time to time in all sorts of business and legal matters, often trivial but sometimes serious, and always detrimental to their spiritual influence.

In the country districts, the monks appeared to their neighbours chiefly as large landowners or

grasping landlords, provoking envy by their prosperity, and often exacting the uttermost farthing in lawsuits. They figure far too frequently in connection with offences against law and order. The Prior of Sandwell in 1260 was assaulted by a band of a dozen armed assailants, including William de Parles, his men beaten, and himself chased, so that he barely escaped with his life. This may well have been an incident of the general disorder of the time, but it was different when in 1265 the Abbot of Hulton charged the Prior of Stone with having robbed him of 300 sheep from his pasture at Normacot, with violence to his shepherd, and with having cut down his corn *vi et armis*. Next year the Cellarer of Stone was charged with breaking into a house while the owner was a prisoner in the hands of the Baronial party: goods value 30 marks were still in his possession. In 1268 the Abbot of Hulton, going to Stafford to sue out a writ, was waylaid and captured by two men who held him to ransom till he paid forty shillings. In the following year the cattle of the Parson of Ashbourne were raided and kept at Mayfield on the manor of the Prior of Tutbury there. In 1272 the Master of the Templars at Keele was proved to have thrown down a fence which a neighbour had raised to protect his corn from the Templars' cattle, and was fined 60 shillings. In 1276, while the King's huntsmen were hunting in the forest of Cannock a stag escaped into the fishpond of the nuns of Brewood. They connived at the appropriation of it—a very serious offence in those days. John Giffard and another dragged it out dead, taking half for themselves and giving the nuns the rest. For this crime, Giffard and his companion were imprisoned and fined; the nuns "as they are poor they are pardoned for the good of the King's soul."

In 1282 the Prior of Lapley was suspected of being the receiver of stolen goods, and whether he were guilty or not it gave opportunity to some of his ill-wishers to represent themselves as the King's bailiffs and to harass and plunder him in that capacity.

In the disturbances which accompanied the deposition of King Edward II. the Abbot of Burton, at the head of a large body of men, harried the lands of Sir Roger de Okeover, broke open the manor-house, shut up Dame Christine, carried off goods and chattels from the house, deer from the park, and game from the warren. He was also accused of other acts of marauding, even in Leicestershire, where he and his band carried off stock to the value of £1,000.

The "religious" became increasingly secular in spirit and interests, and active Bishops, like Roger de Norbury and Robert de Stretton, found plenty to occupy them when they gave their attention to the religious houses. The case of Sandwell may

be cited. It called for the former's frequent intervention. In 1322 the Bishop found Canons of Sandwell roving about under the pretence of going to Rome. It was evidently in a thoroughly demoralized condition, with vagabond canons who brought discredit on their order, hostile neighbours whom it was too weak to check, and a decrepit Prior long past work, but refusing to resign, and at last deposed by the Bishop. But the wasteful and unbusiness-like management of the estates belonging to the house continued. In this way the house was brought to the verge of financial ruin. It became almost deserted, with a single inmate in 1361 and only two in 1379, and in the former year at any rate the scarcity of inmates was not due to the Black Death, which had not yet visited the diocese. In the latter year Prior John of Kyngeston was attacked by a party led by the Abbot of Shrewsbury. They carried him off and held him to ransom at £200, demanding also that he should promise to resign his priorship. Next year Richard de Westbury was elected Prior, but Richard Tudenham obtained a papal provision to the office, and was arrested for having contravened the Statute of Provisors, 25 Edw. III. Ronton was another house where Bishop Norbury found much that was amiss. At Rocester Priory his anger was roused by the *canes venatici* he saw, and by the extravagance which had brought the house into serious debt: his efforts to bring reform were utterly neglected. At Tutbury he found similar abuses—general disorder, incontinency, addiction to hunting, and even a military spirit. In 1346 there was a scandal about the Prior of St. Thomas, Stafford, breaking into the park of Ralf Baron of Stafford, with one of his brethren, and hunting there without licence. Bishop Norbury made two attempts to improve matters at Fairwell, even translating his regulations into French, as the nuns could not read Latin. Stone was also in a state of insolvency, and steps were taken to restore it by appropriating to it Madeley Church. Calwich was unpopular with its neighbours, and Bishop Norbury was ready to adopt any plan which seemed promising. His support of the authority of the parent house of Kenilworth failed in this object, and a few years later it was made independent, without, however, much gain. Bishop Stretton armed himself with the Archbishop's authority to his Vicar-General in the diocese to supervise all elections to the headships of the religious houses, and vigorously used his powers. The decrees he issued for Fairwell have already been quoted. But the ravages of the Black Death and the distractions of the French war prevented his efforts from being very successful.

In 1379 it was alleged against the Abbot of Dieulacres that he desired "to perpetrate maintenance in

his marches;" (in *marchiis suis manutenenciam facere*) and to oppress the people. He had a band of twenty-one retainers, who are described as common disturbers of the King's peace, living with the Abbot and doing all the mischief they can, lying in wait for travellers, assaulting, maiming, and even killing them. Some of these were captured on the definite charge of murdering John de Warton at Leek, and were committed to the Marshalsea, with Edmund de Draycot, Cellarer at Dieulacres, and William del Brugge, Vicar of Leek, who, with the Abbot, had harboured the murderers.

The Abbot of Burton in the reign of Henry IV. was John Sudbury. He was a typical specimen of the time. When Convocation in 1404-5 voted the King a large grant he was appointed one of the collectors, and the grant, being exceptionally large and being levied with exceptional strictness, was bitterly resented. Sudbury, being violently opposed even by his own tenants of Stapenhill, on the Derbyshire side of the Trent, instigated his Staffordshire men to retaliate on them, when they crossed the river and came into Burton to trade, by robbery and violence. The Burton monks were very disorderly at this time, for just previous to this there had been a charge against them of robbing a woman of 100 shillings. They laid in wait on Burton Were, with John Newton, Canon and Chaplain of their hostile neighbour, Sir Thomas de Gresley, as well as the parson of Rolleston and several others. They stole fish and cows. They assaulted one of the King's Escheators. They set at nought not only the Statute of Labourers by paying Thomas Shepherd and many others 4d. a day, "to the sum of 100 shillings," but also morality, for when Abbot Sudbury, in 1407, was driven to obtain a royal pardon for his manifold offences, we find among them that "of having, on Wednesday, Christmas, 6 Henry IV., in his chamber at Burton, ravished Marjory the wife of Nicholas Taverner." So powerful was Abbot Sudbury that he was able to defy his Bishop's summons to answer for the many irregularities with which he was charged.

There was a violent altercation in the time of Henry IV. between the Abbot's men and the retainers of Sir Thomas Gresley, in consequence of which the latter refused to pay the rents of certain tenements in Burton. The rents were obliged to be paid, but the other matters in dispute were to be tried in the Law Courts, and it was specifically ordered that the parties were not to appear in court with more than twenty-four retainers each.

Besides quarrels with neighbours, chiefly in connection with the possession of land, there are signs of internal quarrels, as was inevitable among men living much together with narrow interests and comparatively little occupation. These are hinted

at in the Articles of Enquiry recorded in the Burton Annals in the year 1259. Indeed, the first article is *An omnes sint regulariter obedientes suis superioribus, et unanimes*. The second is *An sint in eis schismata*. Others are *An loquantur in parliamentis nisi sancta et honesta*; *An aliquis sit murmurans propter correctionem sui, vel status domus vel observantiæ regulæ*; *An aliquis professus sit fugitivus*.

Abbot Geoffrey de Mala Terra was deposed in 1094 on the charge of misapplying the Abbey revenues. In 1159 Abbot Robert of the same house was deposed on a similar charge, though he was subsequently reinstated after an interval of sixteen years. In 1308 the Abbot of Croxden was deposed for refusing to attend the General Chapter of the Order. In 1367 his successor was expelled.

The luxurious living of the monks became a by-word, though no doubt the evil has been exaggerated. There is no doubt, however, that in the religious houses ample consideration was given to creature comforts, but the deposition of the Abbot of Burton for drunkenness early in the fifteenth century was an exceptional incident.

The kitchen was often specially endowed. For lands in Stapenhill the tenant of Burton Abbey had to pay 22 shillings annually "*coquinario nostro*." Abbot Nicholas (ob 1197) first put this department on a businesslike footing. Abbot Nicholas de Wallingford (1216-1222) and Abbot Richard de Insula (1222-1223) added to its endowments. In the latter's ordinance he mentions the monk who was cook for the time being, and also the camerarius. Other officials who are mentioned besides the Prior are Almoner, Hospitaller, Sub-Prior and Precentor, Abbot's Chaplain, Sacristan, and Cellarer.

In the Articles of Enquiry of 1259 there is much which points to an appreciation of the danger which might easily arise of setting too high a value on comfortable living:—

"*An sint abstinentes et sobrii*; *An comedant seorsum in cameris, et ad hoc licentientur*; *An sani comedant in Infirmaria*; *An reliquæ pure transeant in eleemosynam et ad manum eleemosynarii et inde pure ad manus pauperum, nullo victu stipendiali inde dato, exceptis stipendialibus victibus servientium eleemosynæ*; *An familia tam abbatis quam obedientiariorum sit habitu et gestu honesta, non superba, non ebriosa, non luxuriosa, vel alio enormi vitio maculata*; *An potent post completorium, nisi evidens et regularis causa coegerit*; *An Abbas cum non extrahant eum negotia domus sit frequens in claustro et ad excessus corrigendos regulariter in capitulo, et nisi propter hospites vel aliam regularem causam impediatur comedat in refectorio*; *An cibentur et potentur uniformiter in refectorio*; *An aliquis obedientiariorum vel alius faciat convivium aliis monachis in festo alicujus altaris vel alias*."

When to the many evidences of secular spirit which we have collected from the history of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries we add the ecclesiastical disputes which have previously been mentioned, we see that the golden age of monasticism had already passed. The religious houses had fallen from their high estate: the monks and canons as well as the friars had sadly declined from their pristine fervour and purity, and were no longer models of rectitude and agents of spiritual influence. They were not worse than their neighbours: their fault lay in the fact that they were so little different from them. Their riches and privileges had already dragged them down to the level of the world.

CHAPTER X. DEMORALISATION.

The causes which combined to produce a lowering of tone in the religious houses have been seen to be of various kinds. The pecuniary usefulness of the Monks to Pope and King tended to make them the shuttlecock of politics. Their extensive worldly possessions made them objects of jealousy to their neighbours, while the secular spirit with which they became infected when they were drawn into the "full stream of the world" weakened their spiritual influence and made them at once more susceptible to attacks and less capable of effective opposition. Events beyond their power to control, like the Black Death, the Hundred Years' War, and the Wars of the Roses, in turn exercised a disastrous influence upon them.

The first definite shock to their security was given, in the irony of fate, by the Papacy. The earliest of the actual events which ultimately brought about the downfall of the religious houses was the suppression of the Knights Templars in the reign of Edward II. In Staffordshire there was a Preceptory at Keele, which had received benefactions from Henry II. It is first mentioned in 1156. The yearly rent paid to the Crown in 1212 was £2 3s. 7d. Like other religious orders, the Templars had occasional trouble with their neighbours, but there is little evidence that abuses existed in England among them, or that they were unpopular. They were suppressed as the result of the action of the Pope and the French King, which the weakness and cupidity of Edward II. proved quite unable to withstand. Only after repeated requests did Edward reluctantly order the apprehension of the Knights. A secret message was sent to the Sheriff of Staffordshire bidding him to be prepared with a body of 14 trusty men on the morrow of the Epiphany, 1308. Five days later he was informed of the destination of his force. He was to arrest the Templars and to seize all their property, belongings, and records. The evidence was sent to the Pope, who, in 1312, ordered the suppression. None of the Templars were executed. Some died in prison, most were dismissed with pensions or sent to religious houses. Edward and his nobles took care to profit by the business. The Manor of Keele was transferred to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, who soon leased it to a lay tenant.

The main interest of the incident lies in the evidence it gives of the completeness of the submission of Edward and his party to Papal influence, and in the fact that it was the first great example of the

suppression of a religious order. The example thus set by the Pope was not forgotten, and as the hold of the religious orders upon the public mind weakened—largely, as we have seen, through their own worldliness and spiritual decline—it was copied again and again.

The Knights Templars fell in the short interval when a weak King was under the foreign influence of the French Pope and the French monarch. But soon the time came when the King was not less hostile to all French influences than the nation usually was. With the outbreak of the Hundred Years' War it was felt to be intolerable that tribute should constantly be passing from dependent cells like Lapley to the mother houses in France, and still more that the Cluniac houses at Canwell and Dudley, and the Cistercians at Croxden, Dieulacres, and Hulton should continue to pay allegiance and tribute to foreign Abbots. Such a position was out of harmony with rising national feeling, and impossible in the political situation of the time. Accordingly, the Alien Pories became the object of unpopularity, which showed itself sometimes in popular violence, as when the Prior of Tutbury, a house with foreign connections, was kidnapped in 1334.

The hands of patrons, and, in a less degree, of bishops, were strengthened. Bishop Stretton made great efforts, as his predecessor had done, to control and reform the religious houses. But difficulties continued to thicken upon them, especially on those houses with foreign connections. Edward III. diverted the payments formerly made to foreign Abbots into his own exchequer.

Heavy exactions were made upon the Cluniac and Cistercian houses by the Royal authority, and we have already seen how the new patrons of Croxden pursued a similar policy, and how indebtedness and mismanagement reigned there. Even Tutbury, strong though it was through its connection with the Royal house, had to obtain Royal sanction when it was desired to admit foreign monks.

It is to be feared that the action which was taken against the Alien Pories was not altogether disinterested. Their spiritual efficiency was but little considered. For instance, the House of Lapley, early in the fourteenth century, was in a thoroughly bad state. In 1334 Baldwin de Spynale managed to intrude himself into the headship, probably by the authority of the parent house. He was excommunicated by Bishop Norbury, and was evidently quite unacceptable to the canons. The strife between the Prior and the Canons brought the house into disrepute and decay, and in 1335 a royal commission had to be appointed to make inquisition into the matter, the advowson being claimed for the King. Apparently Baldwin succeeded in persuading the King

to support him by the promise of a payment of 20 marks yearly. It is a typical instance of the way the royal power threw over the Bishops when it was convenient or profitable to them to do so. But Baldwin's position continued to be an unenviable one. He was attacked by a gang of men, led by the Vicar of Lapley, who broke into his houses, drove away his live stock—40 oxen, 20 cows, 15 bullocks, 15 heifers, and 40 swine—cut down the trees, and broke open his chests and stole the deeds and muniments they contained. This occurred more than once. He was not slow to retaliate on his opponents, and to such effect that in 1352 he had to obtain a royal pardon for all his homicides and robberies committed since the year 1347. In his later years he apparently entered into a more peaceful period, and perhaps deserved the commiseration he received. But his reign was a disastrous one, even to the end, for a serious fire completed his impoverishment and reduced him to such a state of poverty that Queen Isabella had to intervene and obtain for him a remission of his fine for three years. In 1361 Bishop Stretton allowed the Prior of Rheims to nominate Baldwin's successor at Lapley.

The financial difficulties and internal demoralisation of the houses must have been much increased everywhere by the demands for corrodies which were steadily continued. There was no longer any pretence that the royal nominees were to enter the community: they were simply people for whom it was desired to provide cheaply, in consequence of some claim, real or alleged, on the royal bounty. The Patent Rolls show vast numbers of such demands. In the course of a few years we have the following examples:—Richard de Lasteshull, clerk, and Nicholas de Derby, were sent to Burton in 1316; in the same year William Deuros was sent to S. Thomas', Stafford, and Ralph de Castro, with his horse and groom, to Trentham. The year before William de Blakelowe, who had "behaved well in several garrisons in Scotland, and especially in the last siege of Carlisle," had been sent to Stone. Next year Robert de Beston, "Stedeman," was sent to Rocester, and Robert de Crolond to Burton. In 1318 we have John de Treour sent to Burton (on account of his good service to the King and to Queen Isabella) in the place of Bonus le Messenger, Richard de Harwe sent to Croxden, and William le Ferour to S. Thomas', Stafford. John le Treour lived at Burton till 1323, and on his death John le Nakerer was immediately substituted. The presence of disbanded soldiers in what professed to be religious communities must have been exceedingly embarrassing to any who were trying to live in the spirit of their rules, and exceedingly prejudicial to spirituality and discipline.

It was, however, difficult to oppose the royal commands. Burton tried to do so in 1310 and failed ignominiously. Thomas de Bannebury, who had long served Edward II. and his father, was sent to the Abbot and Convent to receive the necessities of life in food and drink, clothing, etc., according to his estate. They replied to the royal missive with a profession of their willingness to acquiesce if they had the power to do so, but they pleaded that their house was the poorest and smallest of their Order in England, and was more heavily charged than any in proportion to its means. They, therefore, asserted their inability to receive the royal pensioner. For answer, they were told that there was trustworthy evidence that their assertions were false, and on their continued efforts to avoid compliance they were summarily ordered to admit Bannebury, and were told that their excuses were frivolous, untruthful, and unacceptable. The position of a pensioner so ungraciously admitted could not be an enviable one, nor his influence for peace and charity a powerful one.

Edward III. sent William Wyghtman, a yeoman of the Royal Butlery, to receive such maintenance for life at Burton Abbey as Thomas Purchase, deceased, had had at the King's request; and next year he sent William de Lichfield to Trentham Priory to replace William Smallwood, deceased, and similar instances might be indefinitely increased. The practice continued to the end. Henry IV. gave his Queen Joan charges on the revenues of Lapley and Tutbury, and even so late as 1532 the Duke of Richmond, Henry VIII.'s illegitimate son, wrote from Calais to the Prior of Tutbury informing him that he had been sent on a mission to France, and telling him that such of his servants as remained behind in England were to be lodged in religious houses, "of whom Robert Amyas, clerk of my jewel house, is appointed to abide at your monastery."

The Black Death was another most disastrous event for the religious houses. It is mentioned in the Annals of Croxden as follows:—In 1349 "there was a great pestilence throughout the whole world," and in 1361, after almost a complete blank in the Chronicle, we read that "a second pestilence took place, and all the children that were born since the first pestilence took place died." In 1369 a third visitation is recorded. The Black Death gave a shock to religious life in Staffordshire, as elsewhere. In 1361 Bishop Stretton ordered Masses and Processions, with Indulgences, to avert it. The normal number of institutions was 35, and in that year it suddenly sprang to 137. In 1369 the number was still 95.

The mortality in the religious houses may be gauged from the scarcity of inmates at Sandwell already mentioned, and from the fact that in 1361

the "Church and Priory" of Lapley was allowed to summon a monk of Rheims to the headship. Doubtless also it accounts in part for the appointment of the Alien Prior at Lapley in 1354. There were wholesale demands for the reduction of rents, and the reduction was generally a little over 50 per cent. The religious houses never recovered from the shock, even as regards their numbers. Degeneration became demoralization.

The new owners of the Manor of Keele, the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, were unable to maintain their authority there. In Richard II.'s reign the tenant, Nicholas Colman, was charged with having devastated the Manor. He was said to have wrought enormous damage, including the demolition of a hall worth 20 marks, a chamber worth 100 shillings, a kitchen worth £10, a stable worth five marks, an ox stall worth six, a dovecote worth ten, sheepfold valued at eight, a grange, a windmill, and a watermill, each valued at twenty, besides a large quantity of timber. The whole extent of the damage was assessed at £200. There were also complaints of trespass and of damage in respect of others.

In 1379 only two Canons remained at Sandwell, and Richard of Westbury, a Benedictine, was appointed. In 1365 the Bishop had been obliged to appoint a monk of Burton to be Prior of the Austin Priory of Breadsall, which was "desolate" through a long vacancy, with a charge to use his best efforts to restore it. In 1367 the affairs of Croxden were in such confusion that the Abbot of the parent house at Aunay had to send a special commissioner to visit it. He found debts to the extent of 152 marks, 8 shillings, and 11 pence. Bad harvests increased the difficulty, and Croxden had to sell much of its property. The insolvency which is found threatening so many of the religious houses at the beginning of the 16th century had evidently already begun. Indeed, early in the reign of Henry VI. the great Abbey of Burton became insolvent and unable to pay its way. Three Abbots resigned in turn—William Mattheve in 1430, Robert Ownesley in 1433, and Ralf Hemley in the same year. The Abbey was put into commission for seven years. In 1514 there was but a single inmate at Canwell, and, as in the case of Sandwell, a hundred and fifty years earlier, he was made Prior.

There are other indications of impoverishment, real or alleged. In 1384 Bishop Robert de Stretton appointed the Prior and Canons of Calwich to be the collectors in the Archdeaconry of Stafford of the Convocation grant, but they petitioned to be excused on the plea of infirmity, poverty, and smallness of numbers (there were only two canons besides the Prior).

Discipline at the same time was breaking down. Some examples of the disorder which confronted

Bishops Norbury and Stretton have already been given. In 1379 the Abbot of Dieulacres, it appeared, had arrested and executed a man of some substance, confiscating his belongings, which included his horse and saddle, bow and arrows, &c. The Abbot was prosecuted for the outrage in the Court of King's Bench, and admitted to bail, while the principals who had actually committed the deed were sought after. A year later they appeared, having procured their pardons, but the Abbot did not obtain his pardon till over two years had expired, and finally no one was punished.

At length, in 1414, the great outburst of national enthusiasm for the renewal of the French War under Henry V. handed to the Crown all the alien houses. The Cluniacs and Cistercians secured their continuance by renouncing their independence, but Lapley was entirely suppressed. Thus another blow was struck not only at the sanctity of monastic property but also at the monastic ideal.

Still, the Monasteries fell more and more out of the high estimation in which they had once been held. The appointment of two of the canons of Stone to the parish church in 1446 shows that the old position of monastic separation and seclusion was steadily yielding to the pressure of new ways of thinking; they must come out into the world and take their share of national duties and responsibilities if they hoped for continuance. In the same reign the advowson of St. Mary's, Stafford, was transferred to the lay hands of Humfrey Stafford.

The conduct of Thomas de Furnivall, as in the case of Croxden already mentioned, shows how patrons long ago had begun to be jealous of the rivals to their influence which their predecessors had placed on the family domains, and the way Calwich became independent of Kenilworth is probably another example of the revival of the rights of patrons. The effect of such a step might have been expected to bring the houses into closer touch with the nation and so to have strengthened their position. As a matter of fact, it only brought them still more deeply into worldly affairs. The patrons often made the heads of their houses executors of their wills. The Prior of Calwich, in 1418, and again in 1425, found himself involved in litigation in consequence of such a position.

It did not make the "religious" more popular with their neighbours. In 1428, Prior Thomas of Trentham had his goods plundered by Richard Twig, of Ashbourn, who also laid in wait to kill him, so that he had to keep a bodyguard of defenders. The Canons of Calwich continued to be out of sympathy with their neighbours. In 1438 the Prior was charged with the forcible detention of 10 oxen and eight cows, for which damages to the amount of £20

were claimed. In 1458 he was troubled by neighbours breaking into his close, cutting down his underwood, and letting loose their cattle to graze upon his pastures. Long ago the benefits the monks had wrought to agriculture had been forgotten; they were now looked upon merely as ordinary landlords—not too popular a class at the best of times, and decidedly unpopular when they were non-resident, as was the case with dependent cells. In the 14th century the Canons of Rochester had to withdraw their priest from the chantry they had hitherto maintained on the Watling Street from fear of violence. In 1413 a monk of Dieulacres, with a large number of armed men, raided a neighbouring park, and took by force a hundred shillingworth of stone, the Abbot being privy to the deed. The Abbot in question was Richard Whitmore, and one of the armed men who led the expedition was Adam Whitmore, Knight. Abbot Whitmore was frequently engaged in quarrels with his neighbours, as was his successor, John Goodfellow. He once stole goods worth £40, and once engaged in a riotous attack on the Vicar of Ilam, who had given the tithes to a neighbour he disliked. Many legal actions were caused by disputes of the same kind at this period.

Under such circumstances the temptation was strong to make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness and to purchase the assistance of powerful friends. The Abbey of Burton being in difficulties during the rule of Abbot Thomas de Southam, who resigned in 1400, an attempt was made to obtain the good offices of "Monsieur John Bagot," the Sheriff of Staffordshire, by an annual payment of thirty shillings. It is a typical example of "maintenance." Such a policy was double-edged, and the powerful "friend" was often encouraged to attempt to extort a higher price for his services. This happened in the present instance. A petition was sent by Southam's successor, the notorious John Sudbury, to the Bishop of Winchester, the Chancellor, setting forth that: "The said John, not being content with the xxxs, in order to force a larger sum from the Abbot, had destroyed his park at Bromley and had taken 20 bucks and 12 does, to the great damage of the said Abbot and to the prejudice and contempt of the King." Moreover, although John Bagot held in chief of the Abbot the vill of Field by homage fealty and escuage and by the service of twenty shillings annually, he had refused to perform his homage; his power in the district was so great that remedy was difficult. Altogether, the situation was one which illustrates very well the danger of the policy we have described, as well as the general weakening of public security through the growing power of great men and the increasing decline of authority. Just as John de

Sudbury, the Abbot who made the above petition, set at naught the Bishop and oppressed his weaker neighbours, so John Bagot the Sheriff abused his position and office in order to enforce an annual bribe from the Abbey—for the petition asserts it had been extorted “by duress and coercion”—to abstain from robbery and violence, which he, nevertheless, practised. The incident is, indeed, an early instance of the general weakness of the central government, which was soon to become the normal state of things, at once the cause and the effect of the Wars of the Roses.

In those years the demoralisation of the religious houses proceeded apace. There is a petition, “à son très gracieuse et très noble Seigneur le Chancelier d'Angleterre,” from John Tamworth, Prior of Sandwell, complaining that, whereas he had been in peaceable possession of the Priory for six years without question, he had been ejected by main force by an apostate monk named Alexander Leddesham, who had come “with a body of malefactors arrayed in manner of war,” and had dispossessed him by main force. Moreover, Alexander Leddesham was playing the part of a freebooter, holding the countryside in awe, “riding about with a great multitude of malefactors.”

The Abbey of Burton had further difficulties with the Gresleys. The Abbot had to petition the Chancellor, Beaufort, for remedy against assaults made upon him and his cellarer by Thomas de Gresley, Kt. and his son in consequence of an award respecting lands in Burton and Stapenhill. The Plea Rolls in the 15th century are full of actions brought by and against the religious houses. An instance of the abuse of “maintenance” occurs in 1473. The Prior of Stone had associated himself with one Sir Thomas Fyton, Kt., in disseising Richard Whalley of various property in Darlaston, Anslow, and Aston near Stone. Neither appeared to answer the charge, and their bail was forfeited. The Prior was fined £6, and the Knight £120, with £60 damages, he having taken the property *vi et armis*. Next year the Abbot of Croxden was sued for being concerned in breaking into Sir William Bassett's close at Musden and taking away 300 sheaves and 20 cartloads of hay. In 1481 the Prior of Stone brought an action against a neighbour who had cut down 4 pear trees, 6 apple trees, 20 small oak trees, and 20 ash trees, besides taking away 200 cartloads of underwood. In 1485 he sued a man for 190 sheep, worth £20, stolen from his predecessor. On the other hand, he was sued for having helped a corviser of Stone to take a horse worth 5 marks, and for insulting, beating, and illegally imprisoning the owner's servant. Laurence Fyton, Kt., had enfeoffed the Abbot of Croxden of 12 messuages, 200 acres of land, and 40 acres of meadow in Thorp, to

the intent that his widow should enjoy the same after his death. But in spite of repeated applications the widow failed to induce the Abbot to fulfil her husband's wishes, and, being unable to obtain remedy by the common law, was obliged to petition the Chancellor, Bishop Neville.

The religious being men of the type such instances present to us, we cannot imagine their spiritual influence can have been great. Of grave moral lapses the instances are rare, but it is evident that worldliness reigned supreme in their ranks. Kings only valued them for their practical and financial utility, and at the other end of the social scale they cannot have commanded any extensive respect.

Moreover, the best thinkers were bestowing their generosity in other ways than by founding or enriching monasteries. Bishop Smythe, the founder of Brazenose College, at Oxford, converted the Austin Priory of St. John at Lichfield into a Grammar School and almshouses in 1495. Such action shows not only that the problem of poor-relief was being realised, but also that the monasteries, even where the distribution of alms had not ceased, were coming to be looked upon as, at any rate, not the sole agents of charity and education, though William Bone, or Beyne, Abbot of Burton, is said to have founded Burton Grammar School in 1520. Moreover, they could no longer count upon the interested support of their dependents and employees, for long ago they had leased out their lands to tenant-farmers; and the parish clergy looked upon them only as pilferers of the tithes which should have been theirs, and as poachers on their proper province. They had few friends. Though pious souls like Sir John FitzHerbert, who died in 1531, could still leave them benefactions (in his will dated 1517 he left 10d. each to Burton, Tutbury, Croxden, and Dieulacres, and 12d. to the "Abbots" of Rocester and Calwich, and 4d. to each chantry in their houses), the tide of public opinion was against them. Impoverished and weakened in wealth, numbers, and efficiency, by the Black Death and its consequences; sharing in the lawlessness and demoralisation which accompanied the French War in its later stages, and the Wars of the Roses; lacking the supervision and guidance which active Bishops had at any rate attempted, and not always ineffectually, to exercise; when the sixteenth century dawned the religious houses were in a sorry state, material as well as moral. They had once been leaders in agricultural development, but their methods were now old-fashioned, ineffective, and out of date. Their wide domains were no longer the sources of wealth they formerly had been; new methods and new outlets for trade had left them behind, and most of them were in debt. Unwise leases only gave temporary relief, and crippled

instead of improving resources. All landowners were indeed feeling the effects of the economic changes, and the result was increased claims upon the monasteries by Kings and patrons. Benefices were requested for nominees in larger numbers, pensions and corrodies were required for friends and dependents ; and the religious houses were not in a condition to make effective opposition. All this meant disaster ; they had broken down as a system, and were tottering to their fall when the New Learning reached England.

CHAPTER XI. WOLSEY'S SUPPRESSIONS.

When the New Learning reached England times had changed since the days when piety had delighted to endow Monastic foundations. The religious houses had outlived their usefulness. Public opinion had long ago begun to set against them. It was not that there were grave and flagrant abuses so much as that there was slackness and secularity. The New Learning when it came found the religious houses fallen behind the times. Charity accordingly sought other outlets than the endowment of monasteries, and the New Learning had little sympathy for the older forms of religious life. Bishop Smythe gave an early example of the way it would deal with old endowments. He was an early Wolsey. Like his greater successor, he founded a College at Oxford—Brasenose—and he diverted monastic endowments for the aid of education. As already mentioned, he suppressed the Austin Priory at Lichfield, and used the property in founding a grammar school and almshouses. Wolsey became Chancellor in the year 1515, and sought visitatorial powers over the English monasteries. Leo X. refused, but Wolsey returned to the charge, and in 1518 obtained the authority he desired, though he knew it would be unpopular in some quarters. He issued statutes for Austin canons in 1519, they being, as has been seen, the most lax of the religious orders. He soon began his splendid educational schemes, and with some difficulty obtained the Pope's consent (April, 1524) to use the revenues of St. Frideswide's at Oxford (where our Staffordshire Cardinal, Reginald Pole, while a student at Oxford, had had a pension, though he was of Royal lineage) towards the endowment of the college he was founding. This, of course, was quite insufficient for the splendid scheme he had in mind, and many further negotiations with the Pope resulted in a series of grudgingly granted Bulls during several years. Meanwhile, Wolsey proceeded with his work. The single house he had previously obtained was by no means all he intended to appropriate, and he had already drawn up the draft of a licence for incorporating for the use of his college at Oxford 21 other houses, including those at Canwell and Sandwell. Their past history has shown that they were ripe for dissolution. The draft is a Latin document of eleven pages, and is in Wriothesley's handwriting. Wolsey trusted to his diplomatic skill, and, with the consent of the owners and patrons, he did not hesitate to anticipate the Papal authorization he trusted to succeed in obtaining. The deed of the dissolution of St. Mary's, Sandwell,

by William Burbank, LL.D., is dated February, 1524. It is a Latin document of 23 pages, written on vellum and is signed by Prior John and sealed by Burbank. The witnesses are Thomas Cromwell, John Clifton (chaplain), Roland Rokyn, and John Lupton. The house was not absolutely closed; provision was made for the religious services to be maintained, and the servants and inmates who were dismissed were recompensed. The church was 84 feet long and 23 feet wide, with a tiled roof. It had a ruinous Lady Chapel on the north side 42 feet long and 14 feet wide, and bells worth £33 6s. 8d. The Manor House was 69 feet long by 15 feet wide, with one side tiled and the other thatched, and three rooms above and below, but its timber was in a bad state. There was a hall and kitchen, the latter also ruinous, a three-roomed stable, a kiln, bolting-house, and chamber for corn, dove-house, and a large barn, 112 feet by 28 feet. The yearly value was £12 in spiritualities and £26 8s. 7d. in temporalities.

Not till September 11 did Clement VII.'s Bull, permitting the suppression of additional monasteries to the value of 3,000 ducats, issue. It received the Royal Assent on October 1. It included Sandwell and, obviously, Canwell, though the writing is partly defaced. On the 13th of January, 1526, the Letters Patent were signed at Greenwich, and delivered at Westminster on January 20, granting to Wolsey the sites, &c. of St. Mary's, Sandwell, and St. Giles's, Canwell, with lands in Staffordshire at Sandwell, Westbromwich, Dudley, Tipton, Magna and Parva Bar, Harborne, Wernell, Coston, Wombourn, Wednesbury, Feccham, Canwell, Drayton, Hyns, Wyfford, Packington, Bittertone, Tamworth, Whittington, Elford, and Farysley. The "parsonage" of Westbromwich is one of those given in the list in Strype's Memorials as "impropriated unto Cardinal College." Canwell was worth £10 in spiritualities and £15 0s. 3d. in temporalities. No time was lost. On February 10 the houses were transferred to John Higden, dean of Cardinal's College, the grant being sealed with Wolsey's seal, which, enclosed in an iron case at the foot of the vellum, remains to this day a splendid impression. The records of the estates were put into excellent order. William Brabazon surveyed the Manor of Canwell, and has left us a full and detailed description of church, manor house, outbuildings, and land, with descriptions, measurements, rental, amount of timber, &c. We have also a detailed list of the cottagers by name, with their rents (1d. per annum per cottage), dated the 13th of March, 1536. A *præcipe* for a fine relating to the possessions of Canwell, and a lease and a conveyance of Sandwell, show that the former also had been dissolved by the year 1527. Its founder, Lord Lisle, had released his title by fine. The latter was "given" by Edward, Lord Dudley.

The same business-like procedure was followed in making over the endowments to the College. The estates having been carefully and fully surveyed, a complete "Register" of all the documents was delivered to Dr. Higden, under date 21st of June, 1527. The Dean himself was a keen business man, like all the men who enjoyed Wolsey's favour, and at once set about improving the revenues, visiting the estates, and raising the rents where it was possible to do so.

The suppression of the monasteries formed part of the charges laid against Wolsey on his impeachment. Dean Higden's raising of the rents was charged against the Cardinal, who was also accused of "shamefully slandering many good religious houses and good virtuous men living in them," as well as often forcing suppressions by "crafty persuasions." The houses alleged to be so wrongfully suppressed were, however, by no means restored on his fall. Full details of them having been obtained by Commissions of local gentry, whatever remained was sold. William Burbank and Thomas Cromwell did the work at Canwell and Sandwell. The sale at the former reached £8 and at the latter £21. The bells at Sandwell were worth £33 6s. 8d. and at Canwell £13 6s. 8d., and debts and rents due at Lady-day amounted to £189 10s. On the other hand, there were the costs of Burbank and Cromwell for their journey from Pickford to Sandwell, and for their five days' stay at Sandwell and three days at Canwell. The fees of the "Praysors" were 3s. 4d.; and one of the monks at Canwell was paid £1 in wages and another 6s. 8d. The Prior's father and the servants also received payments. The work was done thoroughly. The establishment had evidently been leniently dealt with, and indeed to a considerable extent maintained so long as Wolsey lived, but now the religious life at least ceased, for we may conclude that the sale of the bells implies that the churches were closed or put to secular uses.

In the re-arrangement of the endowments of Wolsey's College, Canwell was spared for it, and so was Sandwell, but the Rectories belonging to the latter and the Manor at the former were assigned to the College at Windsor. The Prior of Shene also received some of the lands at Sandwell, and John Voysey, *alias* Harman, Bishop of Exeter, made purchases at Canwell. The "total issues" from the Staffordshire houses are set down in the Account Book of the College for 1530 as £31 7s. from Sandwell and £14 6s. from Canwell.

The benefit to learning conferred by Wolsey's foundation, even in the mutilated form in which it emerged from this re-arrangement, was vast; but his suppression of the religious houses certainly gave the King an unfortunate precedent, while the

men he employed in the work received the training which they afterwards turned to larger account.

At the same time, it is evident the suppression was accomplished with the least possible friction. There were complaints in some places of the overbearing conduct of Wolsey's agents, and these were doubtless justified, but the interests of all who were involved—patrons, monks, servants, tenants—were considered and recognized. Wolsey's object, again, was thoroughly disinterested. No suspicion attached to him of any personal advantage or benefit. His action was a genuine outcome of the revival of learning.

Bishop Geoffrey Blythe was another of the products of the New Learning: a suspect by reason of his advanced opinions, yet a burner of heretics; the ordainer of Colet and the rejector as *indoctus et indignus* of a Canon of Ronton nominated to a vicarage in 1530; the acceptor so early as 1530 of Henry VIII.'s refusal to allow an appeal to Rome which the Bishops of the Province of Canterbury made against Archbishop Warham in regard to probate.

While Wolsey was appropriating monastic endowments for the benefit of learning, Bishop Blythe was engaged in similar work, and he obtained Wolsey's help in suppressing the Benedictine Nunnery at Fairwell.

In 1526 the diocese had received a visit from the Cardinal in person. In March he came to the Cathedral in his capacity of Legate *a latere*, formally to investigate a complaint of the vicars. It did not contribute to his popularity, and was met by a protest on the part of the Great Chapter. However, he examined and ratified the Cathedral statutes; and probably during the Visitation, which lasted from March 5 to April 4, Bishop Blythe discussed the condition of Fairwell with the Cardinal, and received from him advice and encouragement.

In March, 1527, a Commission was sealed by the Cardinal at Hampton Court empowering Richard Strete, B.D., Archdeacon of Salop and Canon of Lichfield, and William Clayborough, LL.D., Canon of York, to complete the suppression. The nuns and chaplains were to be translated to other houses, and the goods of the house were to go to the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield for the support of the choristers. The formal grant to the Dean and Chapter, of the Nunnery and all its possessions, was made on August 28 following. In return they bound themselves to say an annual Obit for the Bishop.

Within a few years Obits and much else had become things of the past.

CHAPTER XII. THE FALL OF CALWICH.

Calwich was a little unimportant house, but the story of its fall must be told separately and in some detail. It is not without its points of special interest; and it forms the connecting link between the dissolution brought about by Wolsey for a wise purpose and the far larger scheme carried into effect by Henry VIII and Cromwell with very different motives.

Wolsey's dissolutions did much more than supply precedents and examples. They revived memories of the suppression of the Knights Templars and of the Alien Priories, and weakened the idea of the sanctity of Church property. More important still, they trained up experts in the work. Thomas Cromwell was Wolsey's secretary, and even at this early stage in his career he earned a reputation for unscrupulousness, harshness, and accessibility to bribery. He and Strete both figured as Wolsey's agents in the dissolution of the Staffordshire houses.

The lessons such men learnt as to the manner of dissolving religious houses, and the special gifts they possessed for such work, were soon given the opportunity of still further displaying themselves. The famous Reformation Parliament met in November, 1529, and to the Convocation which was called at the same time the heads of the following religious houses in Staffordshire were summoned:—Burton, Rocester, Dieulacres, Hulton, Croxden, Tutbury, Stone, St. Thomas (Stafford), Trentham, Ronton, Calwich, and Dudley. Sandwell and Canwell had, of course, disappeared recently. The Bishop of the diocese was Geoffrey Blythe. Archdeacon Strete was one of the Proctors for the clergy.

The Prior of Calwich had been summoned, but he died just at this juncture, and the dispute which arose as to the appointment of a successor enabled the Crown to assert its supremacy at the expense of all parties concerned.

There was but one remaining canon, Dr. David Pole, or Powle; and the representative of the original founder of the Priory, a Ralf Longford, claimed the right of presentation, and sent an agent furnished with means, to London to press his claim. Dr. Roland Lee was one of the King's chaplains, and Chancellor of Lichfield. Richard Strete, the Archdeacon of Salop, Cromwell's agent in the district, wrote to Lee in London informing him of the position of affairs at Calwich, on April 6, 1530, adding that he could find no record of such a right as Longford claimed, and argued that it should not be allowed. It was convenient now to assert the

Bishop's right of appointment. Lord Shrewsbury also put forward claims in virtue of donations to the House by past members of his family. There were other claimants, and the result was that various persons were recommended for the preferment. All this helped to play into the hands of the enemy. Strete's conclusion was that it would be well to consult with Cromwell as to what should be done. Later, Strete wrote fully to Cromwell himself, repeating the same information and giving in detail an account of the spoil that might be expected from the house.

"My duty done, according to your lettres datyd *penultimo die Aprilis*, I have ben at Calwich, and takyn an inventory of the goodes of that house by indenture and commityd the keping and garding of all thinges ther to the Abbott of Rowceter ij myles thens, and on of his brethren abidith at Calwich to overse them who hath kept the sequestre syns the departur of the late prior. The valour of the goodes and laundes foloith.

"*Inprimis*, household very course, as doith appere by particlars in the inventory *xvli. xiiis. iijd.*

"*Item*, in catall, as oxen, kye, horses, mares, shepe, old and yonge..... *lxxixli. xvs. iijid.*

"*Item*, in corne, apon the grounde *xjli. vi.s. viijid.*

"*Item*, stuff for the church, as chales and vestments, &c..... *xli. ix.s. viijd.*

Summa *cxviii. iiii.s. xd.*

"*Item*, the demeanes lyen roundabout the house, and ben worth yerely..... *xxiiili. xii.s.*

"*Item*, other tenthes yerely.. *xviii. viiis. id.ob.*

"*Item*, the paroch church of Ellaston to that monastery appropriated, besyde the Vicar indoment *xiiili. vis. viiiid.*

"In these is no harde peneworth; the house and other byldinges be in mean good state of reparacion. I have dischargyd and put forth such persons as were not mete to be ther, and left such as be husbaundes, and I have made sure the convent saill, and the evidence."

"The first founder ther was Nich. Gresley, in whose title now claymyth Mr. Longford (as men here report). Ther be diverse benefactours that hath gyffyn landes to that house, as it doith appere, viz., my lord Stuard, sir Henrie Saucheverell, Mr. Oker, and other their ansetors. And thus ye may partly perceyve, and what I can do ferther shal be redy by God his grace. Lich. xij°, Maij.

"Yours,

"RICHARD STRETE, preist."

Soon afterwards, events developed still more favourably. The clergy were forced by the King to give him the title of "Supreme Head on earth next after Christ." Bishop Blythe of Lichfield died the same year, and Strete was appointed one of the Commissioners to survey the lands and receive the rents of the Bishopric. Cromwell sent with the Commission a letter in which he thanked Strete for his past services and bade him reward the bearers, Fyndern and Curson, by giving them preference in buying the cattle at the priory of Calwich. They were subsequently thrown over (1533) by Cromwell, their claims stigmatized as falsehoods, and their protestations silenced by significant warnings to "use no such facyons." He had discovered, what his own experience might well have taught him, that "who graunteth suche men an inche they wyll take an ell." Yet Cromwell's earlier letter upon which they based their repudiated claims is still extant*: "A plague upon it when thieves cannot be true to one another."

Calwich had been taken into the King's hands during the vacancy in its headship, which was never to be filled, and its spoliation had begun. The story affords an interesting illustration as to the way the main attack on clerical privileges, which marked the early years of the Reformation Parliament, was accompanied by irregular movements in detail.

An agreement was made between the King and Longford. The Patron surrendered his claim of presentation, and agreed to the suppression of the house in 1532. He was to hold the lands in farm from the King, and the rent was to be fixed by a local jury. Strete recommended the Abbot of Rochester, Sir William Bassett, Sir John Gifford, and himself, but the Sheriff refused to "affirm" the panel by reason of its manifest partiality. Strete's inclusion was in itself sufficient to condemn it: in the long letter in which he suggested it he maligned Longford for "slackness," and recommended Cromwell to press him for £60 which was owing on account of Calwich.

Another claimant to the lands or part of them was the Earl of Shrewsbury, and the Sheriff's panel consisted of the Earl's tenants. It was therefore as little impartial as Strete's, but it met with the approval of Brabazon, one of Cromwell's emissaries, who was sent down to Lichfield to help in the business; and evidently no idea of fairness entered the minds of any of the officials. There were other claimants, too, apparently Sir Henry Sacheverell and Mr. Oker (Okeover), but they could be disregarded. Strete and Brabazon used their powers of persuasion, and the members of the jury, having served their lord's ends by deciding in favour of the

* cf *infra* p. 113.

Earl's claim to "a small portion" of the property, were ready to give their decision as the Crown required. Yet they judged it wiser to save appearances by a show of hesitation; they insisted on an adjournment, though at the same time they promised the requisite verdict. This was in the third week in August, 1532. Of course Strete was able to write to Cromwell in due course (October 21, 1532), "The Office of Calwich is passed for the King." At that time Longford owed £46 5s. 2d. He had also in his possession the tithes (£13 3s. 4d.) and the last Michaelmas rents (£11 16s.) These he undertook to deliver to Cromwell. An escheator was appointed to receive the dues on the King's behalf, and on March 11 of the next year we have a note of Cromwell's (11th March, 1533) that £30 had been received from Strete on the Calwich account. By April 26 the legal formalities were completed, and Strete was able to report to Cromwell:—"The Priory of Calwich, now void, rests in the King's pleasure." This was the year in which the Act was passed giving to the King the rights of visitation of the religious houses, and of course considerably before any Act was passed for their dissolution.

But all was not plain sailing for Longford. In 1534 among the "bills to be signed" was still that of "Sir Ralf Longford for the late Priory of Calwiche." Moreover, Strete was instructed that Mr. Fitzherbert, Longford's father-in-law, was to have the tithes and the growing corn "at such prices as may be deemed sufficient," and Findern and Curson, already mentioned, were repudiated in his favour.

On June 14, 1533, Cromwell wrote to Archdeacon Strete as follows:—"Maister Strete as hertelye as I can I commend me unto you, and whereas by my last letteres I wrote unto you in the favors of Curson and Fyndern to be prefferyd unto the catell and corn of late belongyng to the priorye of Colwyche, and Sythyn that tyme I wrotte unto you on the behalf of Mr. longford for his prefferment unto the demaynes of the sayd pryorye so hit ys that now the sayd maister longford by his father-in-law, Mr. Fyzherbert moche desyryth to have the Tythys and also suche corn as at thys tyme ys sown upon the demaynes of the sayd late pryorye for this yere whych tythe and corn sown upon the demaynes I require yow that he may haffe at such prysys as ye shall thinke convenyent, and in such wyse as the Kynges highnes may be substauncvallye answeyrd of the proffyttes growing of the same without anye Favour to be born to anye othre partye and whereas I wrott in myn other letter that Curson and Fyndern shold have the preffermentt of the catell and corn I dyd not wrytt for anye corne growing on the grounde ne yet for any tythys which in no wyse ye shall suffer them to have but to order hyt as ys afforsayd

most to the Kynge's proffytte and advauntage. I well persayve who grauntyth suche men an Inche they wyll take an ell. I am Infformyd they avaunte themselves to have Commyssyons and graunttes of the Kyng which ys untrew I praye yew advyse them to use no such Facyons. Syr, the Kynge's highnes trustyth that ye with all spede will bryng up the half-yere's Ferme and Renttes of the Busshopryche which I praye yow may be here before his gracyous departyng in progresse and as to the Chanon off Colwyche ye may translate hym unto sum good howse of that relygyon being nere unto yow and to gyve hym sumthing after your discrecyon suche as may stand with the Kynges honour and also to his honest contentacyon, and thus trustyng in your approvyd wysdom and experyence Commytt all the premysses unto your discrecyon trustyng ever that ye wyll have respect to your dew and charge and also that I may have short answer of thes and other my letteres, and so Fare ye well at London, the xiiiith daye of June."

On February 12, 1534, Richard Harecourt became the escheator for the year, and remained till November 18, when another was appointed, who proved to lack the necessary property qualification, so Longford had to pay the King's dues direct. Next year (November 24, 1535) Thomas Skrymsher was appointed.

The King now made one of those outrageous "exchanges" which became so frequent later. The manor of East Molesey was pleasantly situated on the southern bank of the Thames, in Surrey, and had obvious advantages over the remote estate in North Staffordshire. It belonged to the old and historic priory of Merton, where Becket had been educated, where the Parliament had sat in 1236 which enacted the statutes of Merton, and which had provided a refuge for the patriot Hubert de Burgh in his days of adversity. Its past fame and present wealth seemed to warrant its inmates in a confident assurance of security, and they agreed to give the King their riverside manor of East Molesey in exchange for the distant and forlorn cell of their order at Calwich. No doubt they hoped eventually to retrieve its fortunes and to re-establish it as a religious house, though for the present they had to acquiesce in the arrangements regarding it which had just been made. The exchange appears to have been made in 1535-6, and Merton renewed the lease to Longford for £43, with the obligation to discharge a pension of 60 shillings to "the late priory of Kelyngworth."

Almost immediately the process of squeezing the larger houses began, and Merton Abbey soon succumbed. The date of its surrender, with Abbot and fourteen monks, is April 16, 1538. The lease of Calwich to Longford was renewed in the same year.

In 1540 he obtained an acknowledgment that he had paid all his dues to Cromwell and Gostwick, and was empowered to receive from the various escheators "taylès" (tallies, *i.e.*, receipts) for them. The Augmentation Book in 1543 has a record of his 21 years' lease, but the reversion was sold to John Fleetwood.

Longford soon found himself in financial difficulties. In spite of the grant of Calwich, for which Sir Anthony Fitzherbert wrote to thank Cromwell on April 18, 1537, he could not pay the rent due. The Royal escheators were hard taskmasters, exacting the uttermost farthing, and Fitzherbert's letter shows Longford had been some time in debt. In 1541 they levied a distraint, and ejected from the estate the tenants to whom Longford had sub-let it. He had to enter into a bond of £200 to settle the matter, and this only added to his embarrassments. In 1543 he was in the Fleet, the debtors' prison, writing piteous appeals for loans wherewith to discharge his indebtedness to the King.

Ralf Longford, his successor in Elizabeth's reign, on the expiration of the lease made an effort to retain the property, but without success, and Calwich passed to the Fleetwoods. The way they treated the buildings is well known from Erdeswicke's oft-quoted description. Writing about 1593, he noted how the new owner "hath made a parlour of the chancel, a hall of the church, and a kitchen of the steeple." It is strange to find the Fleetwoods of Calwich in the lists of Recusants in later years.

CHAPTER XIII. THE GENERAL DISSOLUTION.

The assembly which has gained for itself the name of the "Reformation Parliament" met on November 3, 1529, and was finally dissolved on April 14, 1536.

Among much else which made it famous was the final separation from Rome which it effected, and the legal sanction which it gave to the work of dissolving the religious houses.

The Act in restraint of appeals to Rome was passed in March, 1533, and on April 30 of that year a writ of summons to the House of Lords was issued for the first time to the Abbot of Burton. Again, in the final session of the Parliament, which passed the Act for the suppression of the lesser Monasteries, the Abbot of Burton sat. The Abbey of St. Modwen thus attained the dignity of having a mitred Abbot, and it is natural to inquire how it came about that it was suddenly given such an honour and at such a remarkable time. The explanation helps us to understand how it was that the King and Cromwell were able to carry through a business which, when executed on a much smaller scale by Wolsey, and with much better justification, had drawn the greatest unpopularity upon its author.

The Abbot of Burton, whose admission is entered on the rolls as having been admitted to Parliament "by virtue of a writ of summons dated the 30th of April, 24 Henry VIII.," was Dr. William Boston. He was one of Cromwell's many satellites, and there are many notes in Cromwell's "Remembrances" which show that the two were in frequent consultation. He had originally been a monk of Peterborough, and was elected Abbot of Burton in 1531. There appears to have been some irregularity or external pressure about the election, as at the next vacancy a strong party still adhered to the monk who ought to have been elected. Probably Cromwell influenced the election of Abbot Boston, as he did that of his successor, and William Boston was summoned to Parliament less in virtue of his office than of his personal character. He could be trusted to vote as Cromwell desired, and to speed the ecclesiastical legislation which was in progress. Later in this same year he was rewarded for his obsequiousness by obtaining the high honour of the Abbacy of Westminster. There his usefulness to Cromwell found greater scope. He was one of the Commissioners appointed to administer the oath of supremacy to Sir Thomas More. On April 13, 1534, Cranmer pressed the argument of loyalty, and, when More pleaded the claims of conscience, the Abbot of

Westminster urged that his conscience should not be set above the opinion of the whole Parliament. More effectively retorted that a general council of Christendom was superior to a council of England, and repeated that he was perfectly willing to respect the succession as ordered by Parliament. As a loyal citizen and as a constitutional statesman he was ready to obey the Parliament in constitutional questions, but could not agree that it had unlimited authority in religion. He could "honour the King," but at the same time he must "fear God."

He was committed to the custody of Abbot Boston for four days, probably in the hope that so plausible and compliant an ecclesiastic would succeed in removing his scruples. But his constancy stood firm, and he soon found himself in the Tower, whence he went to the block.

Boston's successor at Burton also appears on the rolls of Parliament of 1536, voting in the session which passed the Act for Suppression of the Lesser Monasteries. His name was William Edie, *alias* Meverell. How he obtained the post is plain from extant records.

No sooner had William Boston been promoted in 1533 than Cromwell set about securing the election of a successor of the same type. He sent to the Abbey three men like-minded with himself. Roland Lee had served with him under Wolsey in their younger days. The two rose together, companions in much work of an unsavoury nature, of which the business at Burton was comparatively innocent. Mr. Strete's character has already been seen in the matter of the dissolution of Calwich. Mr. Pole was Vicar-General. The three were to secure the election of Cromwell's nominee. But there was much opposition. The majority of the brethren desired to elect one whom ancient custom marked out for the promotion, and it was hoped that the King or the Queen would save them from interference. Cromwell's nominee was strongly objected to. The artful Lee, however, assured the monks that in these virtuous days the Court had abjured all undue interference with the freedom of elections, and easily convinced them they had nothing to hope in that quarter. That accomplished, he was confident of success. On June 25 (1533) he wrote from Burton a report to Cromwell in these words:—"This day, with the assistance of Mr. Strete and Mr. Pole, I have travailed with the convent of Burton, but as yet I have no promise, as one part trusts to have from the King, the Queen, and you, a command contrary to that I have from you. I had never so much to do about such matters because the beryng (? bearing—*i.e.*, demeanour, fashion) in the Court hath been that no man durst mell; and those matters were shortly sped. There is one here that by election should have had the Abbey before,

and yet by the same shall have it according to the ancient order of the law. I beg you to wait for further knowledge from me. Your furtherance of justice shall not be undeserved. I beg your favour to Master Dutton, Sir Piers, whose only trust is in you. It is better for a man to lose his right arm than sue, but only for your good help, and he will keep his promise to you."

Two days afterwards he had succeeded in persuading the monks to leave the nomination of their Abbot to him and Strete. He wrote to Cromwell on June 27:—"I sped the election at Burton, and the compromise is in me and Mr. Strete to nominate one of the Convent before the 1st of August." He apparently had failed to secure the election of Cromwell's original nominee, but it may be taken for granted that the man appointed by Lee and Strete would be sufficiently amenable for all practical purposes. The monks made a submission, and chose the third Prior, whose name was, as we have said, William Edie. Before August was out the Royal Assent had been given to his "election." It was confirmed on April 13, 1334.

When we find such men as Boston and Edie summoned to the Reformation Parliament, in disregard of all precedent, it is evident that no pains were spared to pack the assembly, both at its original meeting and throughout its existence. It is not surprising therefore that it proved compliant and obsequious throughout.

It does not come within our province to give in detail the Acts of the one Parliament in which the Mitred Abbots of Burton sat. Suffice it to mention that it saw the downfall of Wolsey in 1529-30, and the "Submission of the Clergy" in 1532. The Abbot of Croxden was ill in 1531, the year in which Convocation was forced to vote the huge sum of £100,000 to escape the penalties of *præmunire*.

Early in 1531 Bishop Blythe died. The Archbishop's Commission to the Vicar-General to act during the vacancy was issued on January 21 of that year. Strete was appointed in May "to receive the rents and profits of the same [Bishopric] to the King's use" during the vacancy.

"Mr. Strete after most hertie commendacions these shall be to advertise you that by the berers hereof ye shall receyve the King's comission and warraunte gevyng you auctoryte to Survey the londes of the bisshopriche of Coventre and Lichfield and to receyve the rentes and profites of the same to the Kinges vse. And also ye shall receyve his gracious letteres directed to the Eschetor of the countie palentyne of Chester upon the sight whereof I doubt not but he will not onelie Surcease to medle any farther with the receipt of any rentes there, but also in case he have receyved any, will re-pay the same vnto your handes accordinglie. Not

doubting but ye will diligentlie, effectuellie, and trewely put in execucion the teanour and effecte of your saide Commyssion in suche wise as shalbe most for your honestie and to the Kinges most profite and advantage. And for your paynes and diligence alredy taken and sustayned aboute his affayres there his highnes hathe commaunded me to yeve vnto you h's most hertie thankes. And trustith that ye will so indeavour your self in the receipt of the said rentes and revenues as before the feaste of the Natyvyte of Saynt John Baptist next ye will bryng or send vp the hole half-yeres rent or the most parte of the same and that ye will have good awayte and regarde to his haukes in the Cauke there wherein ye shall do and admynister vnto his highnes right good and acceptable servyce.

"And as touching the Catell at the pryorie of Calliche the Kinges gracious pleasure is that ye shall suffer the berers herof named Fyndern and Curson to have the preferment in the byeing of the same vppon suche reasonable prises as they may conveniently lyve on taking of them som money in hande and such sufficient bonde and suretie for the residue as the King may be trewely answered of the same. And so Fare ye well &c.,

"Your mastership."

The concluding paragraph reminds us that it was during the vacancy of the See that Cromwell and Strete were able finally to bring Calwich to an end; and that Strete was no less energetic in his other work is shown by the account which he sent to Cromwell of his subordinates in the work of collecting the episcopal revenues. He wrote as follows:—"Item, to the last part of your letter touching demeanour and the payment to the collectours, in the archdiaconry of Coventry, Derby, Stafford, and Salop, the collectors have amoste made an end in these iij. archdiaconrys, as far as I can perceive is no denying, and as for the collectour of the archdeaconry of Chester I never herd from hym, so I supposyd he had good spede in his gedring. And how and in what manner all thynges is there ye shalbe acertenyd shortly."

Early in 1533, as was afterwards alleged, the King went through a form of marriage with Anne Boleyn, and among those who were variously stated to have performed the ceremony was Roland Lee. He was afterwards made Bishop of Lichfield. His consecration took place on April 19, 1534.

The alienation from the Pope became much more pronounced as the news of the marriage leaked out, and the passing of the Annates Bill, which originally had been introduced for diplomatic reasons, as at once a threat and a bribe to the Pope, became inevitable. Convocation made a vain attempt to retain part of its powers, and on May 8, 1533, appointed some of its members to wait upon the King

to try to induce him to uphold the immunities of the clergy. The deputation consisted of Roland Lee, already called Bishop, though not yet consecrated, the Abbot of Burton, and four others. The constitution of the deputation did not augur well for its success, and two days later the "Submission of the Clergy" was introduced. It was passed in Parliament on May 15. On July 9 the Annates Act became law.

With such open declaration of war against the Pope, the active work of bringing into subjection the religious orders began. Their immunities had made them in many respects resemble a vast Papal garrison in England, and it was imperative that their powers should be diminished. Orders were issued to the heads of all religious houses and to the provincials of the four orders of Friars that no sermons should be permitted except by anti-papists. It was now that Abbot Boston and Cromwell were in most frequent consultation, and that such great care was taken that a new Abbot acceptable to Cromwell should be elected at Burton. Long afterwards, in the reign of Elizabeth, a writer who had been cognisant of the whole process of the dissolution of the Monasteries placed upon record that Cromwell had made a regular practice of thus securing the election of complacent nominees. "He placed Abbottes and ffriers in divers great houses, divers lerned men, and perswaded against these superstitions, *which men were readie to make surrender of their houses at the Kinges commaundement.*"

In 1534 another step was taken in the direction of bringing the monasteries under Royal authority. The visitatorial powers in regard to them were transferred to the King. The "Submission of the Clergy" was also embodied in an Act of Parliament, and the Act of Succession was passed. The Oath of Succession appears to have been taken by all the members of both Houses of Parliament. It was this oath which caused the downfall of Sir Thomas More, in which Abbot Boston played the part already described. Very few of the members of the religious houses followed More's example, for already it was common rumour that a vast scheme of spoliation was being planned, and they dared not precipitate matters by a bold refusal. The rumour was justified, for Cromwell was privately proposing to hand over all monasteries with less than 13 inmates "for the maintenance of the Royal estate," though at the same time he publicly assured the monks that there was no such intention.

The Friars generally refused to take the oath, and as they did most of the preaching in the parish churches, for the wholesale appropriation of tithes by the monasteries had so impoverished livings that few educated men held them, it was necessary

that they should be silenced. Commissioners were appointed, to whom Bishop Roland Lee was afterwards added, to visit all the Friaries, take an inventory of their goods, and examine each inmate separately. In this way most of the Friars in the provinces were reduced to submission, though Lee harried to death some honourable exceptions in London.

In January, 1535, Cromwell ventured to take another step. He procured a Royal Commission, appointing himself vicar-general and visitor-general of all monasteries, with authority to appoint agents for the work. Those most connected with Staffordshire were Doctors Legh and Layton, young lawyers in holy orders, with all the arrogant characteristics of the new age, determined to do their work thoroughly and to the satisfaction of their master and patron, and deterred by no qualms of delicacy or reverence for persons or institutions. Thomas, Abbot of Forde, in Devonshire (now in Dorset), and Mr. Holcroft, are also found in Staffordshire.

But before they set out on their errand there was a pause. Instructions had to be drawn up, and, if the work was to achieve its object, the whole procedure would need careful consideration. Besides, Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher had to be dealt with. In the end it was not till July that the Commissioners actually set out.

Meanwhile, Cromwell did not relax his interest even in local monasteries. In his Remembrances for 1534 there is on April 13 "a copy of Acquittance for the Prior of Tutbury." This Prior died in the following January, and the Earl of Shrewsbury wrote begging the preferment for the Sub-Prior, "Dn. Arthur Meverell." Even before the Prior was dead, a recommendation of Meverell for the post soon to be vacant had been sent in, and an unknown hand has endorsed it "He was my godfather, and I knew him a comely grave man." The Bishop wrote to Cromwell on May 7:—"I beg you will not be displeased in the matter of the Prior of Tutbury. I have your letters wherein you desired me not to meddle therein. But now your pleasure known the bond shall be substantially made and the penalty sent to you with all diligence;" and on May 28:—"I sent to the Prior of Tutbury to repair to you." Dn. Arthur Meverell was, apparently, to judge from his later history, one of the "divers abbottes that could be perswaded or were for the purpose placed [and who subsequently] made surrender of their houses and conveyed them to the Kinge by order of lawe, and had competent pencions." On August 15, 1535, Cranmer wrote to Cromwell on similar business:—"I understand the Priory of Worcester is to be shortly void. If so, be good to

Dn. Richard Gorton, B.D., of the house of Burton-on-Trent."

On February 10 the following peremptory letter was sent to the Prior of Dudley, probably with a similar intent:—"I commend me unto youe. Lating youe wit that for certain causes the particularities wherof ye shal knowe hereafter The Kinges pleasure and commaundement is ye shal immediatly uppon the sight herof all delayes and excuses set aparte personally repaire unto me wheresoever it shall chaunce me to be without faylling as ye wil answer to his grace at your extreme perill. From the Rulles [i.e., Rolls] the Xth of Februarye. Your freend, THOMAS CRUMWELL." The address is "To my Freende the prior of Dudleye yeve this with spede." His name was John Webley.

More's execution on June 6 having ended a long and somewhat embarrassing difficulty, the way was clear for the visitation to begin. Elaborate directions were given to the visitors, the extant draft of which bears evidence of careful revision, probably by the King himself as well as by Cromwell. It consists of no less than 86 articles of enquiry and 25 injunctions. The former are as searching and comprehensive as the latter are severe and intolerable, and, taken together, they enable us to form a good idea of the procedure.

Full investigation was ordered into the foundation and title deeds of each house, and its property, privileges, and benefices; the manner in which the rules were observed; the conduct of the inmates; the bestowal of alms; the keeping of the seal and the accounts; the instruction of the novices; the repair and general management of the property. It is evident from the extraordinary details which are suggested for investigation that not only would an enormous time be necessary for anything like a proper carrying out of the task, but also that every inducement was intended to be offered to discontented or time-serving brethren to come forward with complaints and accusations.

The injunctions which were to be given to the Monks are of the same colour. Not only was the head of every religious house to attack the Pope's power and to exalt the King's in sermon and instruction, but requirements were made which could only make monastic life intolerable. No inmate was to leave the precincts. All entrance was severely restricted and regulated. Other rules followed, some inevitable and laudable, others laying heavy burdens of expense, all difficult of exact fulfilment. No inmates under 24 years of age were to be suffered to remain.

It is impossible to escape the conviction that the object of such proceedings was not reform, but destruction. For instance, the confinement to the precincts was not merely intolerable but was

impossible if the estates were to be properly looked after. Even Cromwell was obliged to own this and to make exceptions.

If it had been hoped that such thorough regulations would make people think that reformation was intended, all such ideas were dissipated by the conduct of the visitors. Their behaviour was not only offensive in itself, but the way they conducted the investigation was such as to preclude absolutely any lingering hope that their intentions were sincere. The rapidity with which they proceeded was alone sufficient to condemn them. For instance, Layton and Legh came to Lichfield on December 22, and the former wrote to Cromwell "*Crastino divi Thome.*"—"This mornyng we depart towards Lichefelde Church, and from thens to certayne abbeys upon Trent syde, and so to pase on to Sothewelle, and to be at Yorke within a day after the xiith day, we intende, and thus to make spede with diligence, and trew knowledge of everethyng is our intent." Their "intent" was accomplished, and the 11th of January saw them "with the Archebushope of Yorke."

In due course they sent in their report. It professed to be a "*Compendium comperorum per Doctorem Layton et Doctorem Legh in visitatione regia in provincia Eboracensi ac episcopatu Coven. et Lichfelden.*" It was presented to Parliament within six weeks from their setting out from Lichfield, during which time they professed to have investigated the affairs of 88 monasteries. It is evident that the inquiry must have been of the most superficial nature, and cannot possibly have been conducted with any care. The only mention of Staffordshire is of the Cathedral at Lichfield, and the worst they can say of it is:—"Here a pilgrimage is held to St. Chad. Annual rent, £400. Founder, the King."

Much alarm was naturally aroused by the appearance of the visitors. Even the Bishops were inclined to resent such intrusion into their province, but they were reduced to silence by a prohibitory letter from Cromwell in September forbidding them to interfere in any matter connected with the religious houses during the progress of the visitation.

To act upon the evidence of the visitors was among the latest work of the Reformation Parliament. Its last, and by no means least, important session began on February 4, 1536. No attempt appears to have been made to sift the evidence alleged against the Monasteries, but it was worked up with appropriate embellishments into the preamble of an Act which was passed in March, and transferred to the King all religious houses of the annual value of less than £200 a-year. Such evidence of abuses as is extant by no means allows us to draw such an arbitrary line and to say that the lesser

houses were blameworthy and the greater innocent. Yet that is what the Act did, making it more emphatic by pointing to the contrast between the "manifest sin, vicious, carnal, and abominable living" in the houses to be dissolved, and the character of "divers great and solemn monasteries of the realm, wherein, thanks be to God, religion is right well kept and observed." Indeed, as a matter of fact, the evidence which remains points rather the other way. Many of the great Monasteries were certainly visited, and it was seldom indeed that such men as Layton and Legh could not find something scandalous. But many of the lesser houses were apparently passed over by the principal commissioners, as we have seen, and if they were visited at all it was by less responsible agents like Master Holcroft, who visited Burton-on-Trent, and Abbot Thomas, himself a renegade, who visited Croxden.* In neither of these cases, and in no case in Staffordshire, is there any extant evidence of abuses. Reports must have been sent in, but either they have perished or they have not yet been brought to light. The houses in Staffordshire included under the Act were, besides the Friaries, Tutbury, Rocester, Croxden, Brewood Nunnery, Hulton, Trentham, Stafford (St. Thomas the Martyr), Stone, and Ronton. With these was classed St. Mary Broke, Rutland, and the total value is given as £976 5s. 3½d.

Burton-on-Trent was excluded by reason of its value, and Dudley Priory, as a cell to Wenlock, survived till its superior house fell in 1540. The suppression of Calwich, already completed, was legalized by a clause in the Act which gave to the King all religious houses "that otherwise hath be suppressed or dyssolved," and the way was opened for others to follow, besides those whose value was under £200.

To deal with the treasure which would accrue to the Crown, a special "Court of Augmentations" was created. It consisted of a chancellor, treasurer, attorney and solicitor, ten auditors, 17 receivers, &c., and its business was to take the surrenders and dispose of the property and movables. The chancellor was Sir Richard Rich, the Solicitor-General.

The treasurer, we find from Staffordshire documents, was Sir Thomas Pope, better known as the founder of Trinity College, Oxford. Of the auditors, the one most concerned with Staffordshire was William Cavendish, brother of Wolsey's biographer. The receiver who did most work in our neighbourhood was John Scudamore.

No sooner was the Act passed than a most unseemly scramble for the spoils began. Petitions flowed into Cromwell and others of influence begging, often in

* Abbot Thomas's Commission, from the original in the Public Record Office, is given in full in Appendix I.

the most abject way, for favours. Sometimes the patron sincerely desired the preservation of the house his family had founded. Such was Sir Simon Harcourt, who wrote on April 2 as follows to Cromwell:—"I am informed that it is enacted in Parliament that certain religious houses shall be dissolved. There is a little house of canons in Staffordshire called Ronton, built and endowed by my ancestors, to the intent they might be prayed for perpetually, and many of them are buried there. I would gladly be a suitor for it to the King, but I dare not, as I know not his pleasure. I beg you will be a mediator to the King for me, that the same house may continue, and he shall have £100 and you £100 if you can accomplish it, and £20 fee out of the said house. If the King is determined to dissolve it, I desire to have it, as it adjoins such small lands as I have in that county, and I and my heirs will pay so much as the rent of assize cometh to, and give you 100 marks." Sir Simon Harcourt evidently realized the state of affairs thoroughly well, and equally thoroughly understood the sort of man to whom he was writing. Sincerely as he desired the continuance of the burial-place of his ancestors, he knew that Cromwell would recognize no such filial sentiments, so he boldly offered him the large bribe of £100. But a more powerful suitor was in the field. On April 27 Henry Lord Stafford wrote urging his claims. "I beg you will use means with the King that I may have the farm of the Abbey of Rantone if it be dissolved. It is within four miles of my house, and reaches my park pale, and I will give as much for it as any man. I heard that the Queen had moved the King to have me in remembrance for it, and he was content, saying it was alms to help me, having so many children on my hands. I heard that George Blunt endeavours to obstruct my suit." Next day he wrote to the Earl of Westmoreland begging him to use his influence with the secretary on his behalf, and, failing Ronton, he asks for the house of the White Ladies at Brewood, urging "it is only £40 rent by year, and is in great decay." Stafford's suit, thus supported, found more favour than that of poor Simon Harcourt. Richard Cromwell, "honeying at the whisper of a lord," wrote to Lord Stafford on May 15 "As to the Abbey you wrote about, my uncle says he will not fail to obtain it for you when the surveying of the Abbeys is at an end." Stafford had not obtained the house in March of the following year, for Harcourt made a brave fight for it. Later we shall find Lord Hastings asking for Burton.

But squires and lords were not the only people who interested themselves in the dividing of the spoils. Bishop Roland Lee was as forward as any in urging his claims. On April 29, 1536, he wrote to Cromwell, "Remember my suit for the Priory

of St. Thomas (Stafford), of which not only the King, but you, shall have a certain sum. If that cannot be, I trust, as the demesnes came from the Mitre, I may have the preferment of the house and the demesnes for one of my kinsfolk." He failed to obtain the priory at once, though he made repeated efforts. On June 27 of this year he wrote, "Though your suit for the Priory of St. Thomas in my behalf cannot stand, yet as you mind my preferment to the farm of the demesnes, I thank you. I desire them only for quietness, not for advantage;" and he wrote again on April 3, 1537. The Priory, having been founded by the Staffords, was preserved for a while by their interest, and the tombs of the family were removed thither from the suppressed house at Stone.

The Prior of Stone was William Smith, and he does not appear to have had any suspicion that his house was soon to come to an end. Even while the visitors were making their investigations, if, indeed, any investigation at all was made in the great majority of cases, he was engaged in the business of his house. In his financial transactions with his Bishop he found the latter more worldly-wise than he was himself. Bishop Roland Lee sold him timber out of Blore Park and received the payment. But, being better informed of the trend of events, he prevented many of the trees from being felled and delivered to the dying Priory. On February 19 William Smith wrote urgently to Lee, "Touching the timber in Blore Park which I bought and paid for to my lord, 40 trees are still standing, as the bearer can show. If I have not the said timber I know not where to be provided for my great work now in hand. I shall intreat you for your pains." Several months later, Henry Lord Stafford wrote to Cromwell telling him "that the Prior of Stone hathe good hope that his howse schall stand, whereof all the contree is right glad, and praye fulle hertily for your lordeship therfore." The Earl of Shrewsbury, however, had designs on it, and sought the assistance of Scudamore in obtaining it, bringing himself to address his letter "To my hertly biloved fellow John Skydmore, oon of the gentylmen vsshers of the Kynge's most honorable Chamber."

This was while the work of suppression was in progress. The "Instructions for the King's Commissioners" are exceedingly minute. For each county an Auditor and Receiver was to be appointed, with one of the clerks of the late visitation, and to these were to be joined "three other discreet persons to be named by the King." These were to visit each condemned house and exhibit the Statute of Dissolution to the head and his brethren. The inmates were then to be required to make on oath a full disclosure of the state of their affairs, to

surrender their charters and seal, plate, and other effects. Such of the monks as were willing to take "capacities" were to be referred to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chancellor, and were to be rewarded for their complacency; the rest were to be transferred to other houses. Orders were to be given that the monks were to cease receiving any income except such as was absolutely necessary, but they were to continue "to sow and till their grounds as they have done before," and the Superior was referred to "the Chancellor of the Augmentation for his yearly stipend and pension."

Henry Lord Stafford, writing to Cromwell on March 12, 1537, says:—"The Commissioners will be in Staffordshire on Sunday next. The Prior of Stone thinks his house shall stand, whereof the country is glad; so my suit is in vain unless your Lordship help me to the Priory of Rontone, for which I was first suitor; howbeit Sir Simon Harcourt makes great labour for it;" and he proceeds again to plead his poverty and his large family, mentioning that he had twelve children.

The Court of Augmentations received the Reports of these mixed Commissions, which, so far as they are extant, bear out the opinion expressed by Lord Stafford as regards Stone—viz., that popular opinion usually desired the continuance of the monasteries.

It then issued orders respecting the fate of the Houses. The following in Staffordshire were at once dissolved:—Ronton, Stone, and Trentham. The majority were spared, some, as we have seen, through the intervention of powerful or interested friends, but all on payment of large sums. For instance, Hulton having paid £66 13s. 4d., obtained a grant of exemption on October 1, 1536, the Prior being Edward Wilkyns; Rocester's grant was made on March 11, 1537, and its payment £100; Tutbury, per Arthur Meverell, received its licence on May 3; Croxden, per Thomas Chawner, on the 2nd of July, by payment of £100*; St. Thomas', Stafford, per Richard Whyttewall, on July 4, by payment of £133 6s. 8d. On April 3, Robert Burgoyne had written to the Bishop, who so earnestly had desired the Priory:—"According to your desire I have forwarded letters from the Chancellor of the Augmentations to Mr. Scudamore to survey the lead of the late house of Canons beside Stafford," which shows how narrowly the house escaped, even for a time, the clutches of Roland Lee and Cromwell, for though he spoke of it as "the late house," it did not surrender till October, 1538. Lee kept up his persistent begging for it to the end.

* The License to continue, granted to Croxden, is given, from the original in the Public Record Office, in Appendix II. It will be noticed that the King's new title *Supremum caput Anglicanæ Ecclesiæ* is given in its most offensive form, without the qualifying words.

The fines for continuance were exceedingly heavy, and must have impoverished the houses considerably. Many had been in debt before, and the numerous calls made on them in the last years of their existence must have added much to their financial difficulties. Moreover, the officials looked for bribes and presents. The houses were impoverished by direct methods as well. Prior Richard, of St. Thomas's, Stafford, was ordered to give the lease of a church at Audlem in Cheshire, belonging to the Priory, to a nominee of Cromwell's. He protested against the unfairness, though he was unable to avoid compliance. "It is," he says, "in the occupation of five poor farmers there by lease," but he had to give Cromwell's nominee a fifty years' lease in reversion, in consideration of Cromwell's "goodness," and the lessee was to pay six shillings and eightpence, whereas they could have had 40 marks from another. He adds that last Midsummer he paid Cromwell £60 and now sends £20 more.

The same policy of crippling the Abbeys was pursued even towards Burton, which did not come under the Act. On August 15, 1538, the Abbot of Burton-on-Trent wrote to Cromwell:—"On the 12th of August I received the King's letters and yours in favour of Mr. Robert Everest, one of the servers of the Chambers, for the tithe of the parsonage of Allstrye, Warwickshire. That tithe is so necessary for our house that we cannot do without it, and was appropriated under the broad seal of England because we had not corn sufficient for hospitality. You write that Sir Thomas Gresley lately deceased, had it. But that is 34 years ago, and he only had it then because the Abbot was indebted to him." The whole set who were concerned in the work, from Thomas Cromwell and Bishop Roland Lee, down to the very "servers of the Chambers," appear as a gang of thieves scrambling for booty, and anxious only to turn their opportunity to the best account. A Yeoman of the Guard, named Richard Slide, was made Bailiff of the estates at Stone which had belonged to the Priory. Henry Lord Stafford wrote to Cromwell:—"On Friday last, oone Sutcote, server of the Kinges Grace Chamber, came down to the White Ladies and showed theym that he [had] the Kynges Grace leave to have the saide Howse, and hath offerd hit to dyvers to selle on suche a price that no man will gladly by hit at hys hand."

Various members of the Royal Household obtained leases of monastic lands, for instance at Trentham, Ronton, Brewood, Stone, &c. Richard Trentham, of the Household, had Trentham Priory with the Rectory there in November, 1537.

Lord Stafford's efforts to save Stone failed, but the uncertainty which prevailed, and the gradual

but steady way in which the whole dissolution was carried on, is shown by Lord Stafford's action with regard to the family monuments there. He would hardly have carried out so difficult and costly a business as to transfer them to the Austin Priory at Stafford if he had had any idea that that house, too, would fall ere many months had passed. Bishop Roland Lee, as one of Cromwell's colleagues, was, as we have seen, in the secret, and looked forward to the fall which soon befel the house.

It was, however, to the interest of the agents of the dissolution to conceal the real scope of their intentions, for the threatened monks naturally tried sometimes to keep back part of their cherished possessions, and to save the sacred vessels and vestments from the profane uses to which they were to be put. The Prior of Stone was accused of such action, and some of his neighbours, who, as we have seen, resented the suppression of the house, abetted him. "Articles and instructions" for special commissioners were issued "concerning the embezzling and taking a[way] of certain plate, jewels, ornaments, goods, and chattels of the late monastery of Stone whereupon as well William Smyth, late Prior of the said house, James Colyer, James Atkyn, Sampson Greswike, Geoffrey Walke-den, and Hugh Rathebone, and all such other persons as Thomas Woodall, bringer hereof, shall name, are to be examined." The house appears to have been dissolved on February 4, and the specific charges are as follows, so far as they can be traced, for the document unfortunately exists in a fragmentary form only:—"Whether Colyer received a shrine, four standing cups, and two silver salts; whether Atkyn received certain sheep and cattle since the said fourth day of February; whether Greswike since the fourth day of February hath of the said house" and there the paper ends.

But the fact appears to have been proved, for in the Augmentation Accounts for 1538 we find "A parcel of £20 due from James Colyer for the surplus value of a shrine of silver-gilt mortgaged to him by the Prior of Stone, part of which was paid 5 of June, 30 Henry VIII., £13 6s. 8d." The Abbot of Dieulacres secured blank forms with the Convent seal before it was taken from him, and on these he subsequently made out ante-dated leases. Bishop Lee reported to Cromwell that the Prior of St. Thomas at Stafford was making "unreasonable waste," which probably means that he had realized the uselessness of economy in the face of imminent dissolution.

The harrying of the houses continued, and the feeling of uncertainty deepened. It became more and more evident that the whole monastic edifice was falling. On February 20, 1538, Francis Lord

Hastings wrote to Cromwell begging for the Abbey of Burton, apologizing for not writing sooner, and explaining that he should have done so but that he had been suffering from measles. On August 23, Cranmer wrote urging on Cromwell the suppression of Tutbury, and desiring that Commissions should be sent to Rocester and Croxden. These had all paid large sums for their continuance only a year before, but Cranmer was interested in obtaining them, or one of them, for his servant Francis Bassett. Again, on December 14, he wrote begging for Croxden to be given to Bassett. Such solicitations had their effect, and the surviving houses discovered that their attempts to secure a further lease of life by definite payments to the Royal Treasury or by irregular bribes to Cromwell and his friends had all alike failed. The deed of surrender of Tutbury is dated the 14th of September, 1538; that of Rocester the 16th of September; that of Croxden the day following.* At Tutbury there were eight other inmates besides Arthur Meverell, the Prior; at Rocester the same number, with William Grafton as head; and at Croxden twelve, with Thomas Chawner as Abbot. In the latter part of October, the Benedictine Nunnery at Brewood surrendered (October 16); on the 17th, St. Thomas's, Stafford; and on the 20th, Dieulacres. Dr. Thomas Legh was the agent who received these Staffordshire surrenders, accompanied by William Cavendish as auditor. The plan adopted in the earlier surrenders, of securing the co-operation of the local gentry, had been abandoned, because it had proved too slow, for it preserved some semblance of equity, and because in many cases such commissions reported well of houses which Cromwell's visitors had previously defamed.

The goods at St. Thomas's, Stafford, which Bishop Lee "thought meet" were sold to him for £87 9s. 6d. The Prior, Richard Whitwell, received a payment of £6, and a pension of £26 13s. 4d. The five brothers received 40s. each and pensions of £5 or £6. £12 was divided among the 26 servants. There was lead worth £40, as well as four bells worth £54. The plate came to 28½oz.; some had been mortgaged, and the house was encumbered with debts to the extent of £235 19s. 7d.

Dieulacres was sold to Edward Earl of Derby for £63 14s. 10d. Abbot "Thomas Wytney" received £6 and a pension of £60. There were twelve monks, and each received from 40s. to 50s., with pensions varying from £6 to 40s. each. The house had 50 servants; among whom £14 5s. 10d. was distributed, and eight poor bedeswomen, who were cheaply dismissed with 26s. 8d. The Commissioners found

* The Deed of Surrender, from the original in the Public Record Office, is given in full in Appendix III. See also *Notes*, pp. 167, 168.

87oz. of plate and 30oz. of white plate. They estimated the lead to be worth no less a sum than £720, and they valued the six bells at £37 10s. The house was in debt to the extent of £171 10s. 6d.

The Benedictine Nunnery at Brewood appears to have been spared till October 16 by reason of its poverty, but in spite of this there were conflicting claims to it. No crumbs were too small for the pariah dogs who fought for the refuse left by their greedy masters. Five days before Dr. Legh arrived there he received, on October 11, a letter from Sir Thomas Hennege telling him the house was to be given by the King's orders to Sir Thos. Gyfford, a Gentleman Usher of the Chamber, who had been begging for it for over a year, and continuing, "At your now being there you shall put him in possession, and he may at leisure apply to the Chancellor of Augmentations for the lease." However, when Legh arrived at the house he found himself in a difficulty. There was a rival claimant. He wisely referred the matter to Cromwell, enclosing Hennege's letter and saying, "There was Mr. Littleton also who said the King was pleased he should have it, as he perceived by your lordship when he was last in London." The cautious Legh did not care to run the risk of offending anyone, so he solved the difficulty in a characteristic way, as he explains:—"Wherefore I and Mr. Candisshe have put them both in possession, and sold the stuff to them both till they may know the King's pleasure." He had gone on the same day, after finishing this business at Brewood, to Lilleshall, and concludes, "Now being at Lilleshall, I intend to put Mr. Candisshe in possession of the farm of the house who prays you that in his absence he be not in this behalf supplanted." The letter throws a strong light on the jobbery, self-seeking, reckless and indiscriminate sharing of plunder which was going on.

In the result, Brewood was sold to Thomas Gyfforde for £7 6s. 1d. The Prioress received 40 shillings, and three nuns twenty shillings each as "rewards," and eight servants received between them 78s. 2d. The expenses of Lee and Cavenish amounted to no less than half as much again as the Prioress received—namely, 60s. Rents to the amount of £4 3s. 4d. were in hand, and these were of course taken; 34s. 9½d. was still owing as rent. Prioress Isabel Launder was awarded a pension of 66s. 8d., and the three nuns half that amount each.*

Meanwhile, Cromwell had issued some injunctions to the clergy on September 5, 1538, ordering, among other things, "that such images as ye know in any of your cures to be so abused with pilgrimages or offerings of anything made thereunto ye shall

* Various details connected with the Surrender of Brewood are given in Appendix IV.

for avoiding of that most detestable offence of idolatry forthwith take down and deley admonishing your parishioners that images serve for no other purpose but as to be bookes of unlearned men that can no letters. . . . And, therefore the King's highness graciously tendering the weal of his subjects' souls hath in part already, and more will hereafter travail, for the abolishing of such images as might be occasion of so great an offence to God and so great danger to the souls of his loving subjects." No charge of superstition had been brought against the image of St. Modwen at Burton by Layton and Legh at their visitation, but none the less it was pulled down. Sir William Bassett, of Meynell Langley, a few miles from Burton, wrote as follows to Cromwell:—"Ryght honorabull my inesspeyciall gud lord, accordyng to my bownden dewte and the tenour of youre lordshypys' lettres lately to me dyrectyd, I have sende unto youre gud lordschyp by thys beyrer, my brother, Francis Bassett, the ymages off Santt Anne off Buxtone and Santt Mudwen of Burtun-apon-Trentt, the wych ymages I dyd take frome the place where they dyd stande, and brougnt them to my owne howse within xlviii howres after the contemplacion of youre seyd lordschypis lettres, in as soober maner as my lyttull and rude wytt wolde serve me. And ffor that there schulde no more idollatre and supersticion be there usyd I dyd nott only deface the tabernaculles and placis where they dyd stande butt allso dyd take away cruchys, schertes, and schetes with wax offeryd, being thynges that dyd allure and intyse the yngnorantt pepull to the seyd offeryng; allso gyffyng the kepers of bothe placis admonicion and charge thatt no more offeryng schuld be made in those placis tyll the Kyng's plesure, and yowre lordschypis be further knowen in that behalf. . . . And, my lord, as concerning the opynion off the pepull and the ffonde trust that they dyd putt in those images and the vanyte of the thynges, thys beyrer, my brother, can telle yowre lordschyp much better att large than I can wryte, for he was with me att the doing of it all." The said Francis Bassett was in the service of Cranmer, and we shall meet with him again; "There cam nothyng with theym but the bare imagis." Bishop Lee saved from the spoilers the jewels of St. Chad's Shrine at the Cathedral for "necessary uses." Prebendary Arthur Dudley was one of the authorized commissioners for holding such Church goods as were seized by the Crown, but he apparently revered holy things, and gave the bones of St. Chad to some female relatives of his. The latter handed them to two brothers named Hodgetts, and eventually some of them have been deposited in the Roman Catholic Cathedral at Birmingham. The shrine disappeared, and as the

relics had gone the Cathedral was spared such outrageous sacrilege as was witnessed elsewhere.

Requests had already been made for Burton Abbey. It had been "altered" by the commissioners of the North before December, 1537; it was finally suppressed, according to Dugdale, November 14, 1539.

While the Monasteries were being confiscated, the Friaries for some time were left to themselves. They were poor and had few inmates, and their houses were not situated in pleasant situations, with broad estates reaching "to my lord's park pale." They were, indeed, within or near the walls of the towns, and, consequently, were of little interest to the aristocracy.

But their poverty was no permanent security. On February 6, 1538, Dr. Ingworth, the renegade Prior of the richest house of the Black Friars in England, and lately made Suffragan Bishop of Dover, was commissioned to visit all the Friaries, and he rapidly carried out his work. We have very full particulars of his campaign in Staffordshire, and some remarkable details. On August 7 he was at the house of the Grey Friars at Lichfield, on August 9 he decided the fate of both the Friaries at Stafford, and next day he was equally effective at Newcastle-under-Lyme; and this in spite of the fact that he was obliged to confess that "the Friars in these parts have many favourers, and great labour is made for their continuance. Divers trust to see them set up again, and some have gone up to sue for them." But he tells Latimer (on August 23) that such strong expressions of popular opinion had had no terrors for him; he had visited 18 places, including Lichfield, Stafford, and Newcastle, and had only left one house standing.

The Staffordshire Friaries were without exception poor places in every respect, and the Bishop cleverly made that a strong argument against them. In spite of poverty, they clung to their old homes and work, although he invariably offered them money payments to depart. Writing from Lichfield, he told Cromwell that "divers of the Friars are very loath to forsake their houses, and yet they are not able to live." The house at Lichfield, for instance, he says, "is in that taking, and yet loath to give up." The day after he had been there he wrote Cromwell a full account of his visit. He announced that in spite of their wishes he had induced them all to surrender. The warden was in a pitiable state of ill-health, with a loathsome disease on his face. He had been little at home for the past six months, "yet now he came home and was loath to give up his house, though it is more in debt than all the stuff that belongs to it will pay, Chalice, Bells, and all, by 20 nobles." The certificate of surrender is dated August 7. It states that the house was

surrendered voluntarily, without any counsel or constraining, for very poverty—a manifest falsehood as the Bishop's own letters testify. The witnesses of this surrender were Richard Wetwode, "Master of the Guild there," and the two constables, Alexander Grene and Thomas Lont. The visitor delivered the house and goods to these three, gave every Friar a letter, and departed. An inventory of the goods so delivered follows, and comprises articles in kitchen, brewhouse, choir, and sextry. There is also a statement of the debts owing by the house, which were partly for malt and rye, with 30 shillings which had been borrowed "for byldyng of the quere" and 20 shillings due to the Bishop for five years' rent. Four days later Dr. Legh wrote to Cromwell, on his own account and also at the instance of the Bishop, to both of whom Wetwode had shown "great pleasure," asking that Wetwode should have the prefrment. It is evident that just as great lords and enterprising country squires were interested parties in the suppression of Monasteries, so the rising tradesmen in the towns cast longing eyes on the houses of the Friars. This accounts for the co-operation of the municipal authorities in the work of dissolution.

A very full and detailed account of the Bishop's procedure in regard to the Friars is given in a memorandum referring to the visitation of the two houses at Stafford. It is a most interesting and valuable document.

"Mem. This 9 day of August in the 30 year of our most dred Sovereign lord King Henry VIII., Richard Bishop of Dover, visitor under the Lord Privy Seal for the King's Grace, was in Stafford in the Grey Friars and also in the Austen Friars, where that the said Visitor said to the heads and brethren of both places these words: Brethren, where that I understand ye have had information that I should come, by the King's Commission, to suppress your house and put you out, fear not, for I have no such commission, nor I use no such fashion in any place. I am sent to reform every man to a good order and to give injunctions for preservation of the same. If ye can be content and think yourself able here to live and to be reformed and to observe such reasonable injunctions as I shall leave with you, the which or that I require your answer, ye shall here and see in writing, then I am and shall be content that ye shall with the King's favour continue as before ye have do. If that ye be not able to live and observe the same then if ye of your own minds and wills give your houses into the King's hands I must receive them. The said injunctions were read to them which were reasonable. The said heads with all the brethren with one assent, without any counsel or co-action, gave their houses into the Visitor's hands to the

King's use. The Visitor received the same, and of the houses and implements made inventories and delivered them to such as should keep them to the King's use, and so delivered to each friar a letter to visit his friends and so departed. This witnesseth John Savage and Thos. Russell, Bailiffs of the borough of Stafford; Wm. Stamforde and Ric. Warde, gentlemen, with divers others.'"

The mean trickery as well as absolute perversion of truth in the Bishop's conduct and statement could not be better shown than in this interesting record. The wretched Friars were already trembling for their own safety, as they saw the Monks on every side dispossessed and impoverished, and impoverished themselves at any rate by the check which the events of recent years must inevitably have given to bequests and alms to all similar institutions. Disheartened by long uncertainty, they fell easy victims to the bullying and falsehoods of the plausible Visitor and his coadjutors, the vulgar and rich shopkeepers who accompanied him, the latter eager for the site and buildings, adjoining perhaps their own places of business, and certainly convenient for warehouses and store rooms. It was not till the spring of 1539 that Parliament passed an Act recognizing the *fait accompli* and giving the King all the religious houses.

The Inventory of the possessions of the Austin Friars at Stafford, which were placed in charge of William Stamforde, of Rowley, and Master Richard Warde, of Tilynton, is full of interesting details throwing much light on the ecclesiastical and economic arrangements of the time. In the Vestry there was a cross of copper gilt "with an image silver of parcel gilt," a copper censer, four "suits" (i.e., sets) of vestments, one black set for requiems, and one with "images" of the Blessed Virgin, two green copes, one black "chamlet," &c. In the choir were two old altar cloths, two small candlesticks, a sacring bell, and a "pair of organs." There were two bells in the steeple. In the church were two stained cloths, an alabaster table, two ladders, and two benches. The contents of hall, kitchen, recreation house, &c. are also given. There was little or no lead, and the yearly rents amounted only to 51s. 8d. The Visitor took into his own keeping the chalice, which weighed 13oz., and he ordered that the servants should be paid ten shillings of their wages at the next Michaelmas.

The Inventory of the house of the Grey Friars is similarly detailed. In the sextry there were five "suits" without albs; a suit for requiems, one each of dun silk, yellow say, and branched green silk. There were six copes, two being of linen cloth "stained with image work." There were six altar cloths, a pyx of latten, &c. In the church were four alabaster tables, a pair of large candle-

sticks, a cross, and a censer of latten, two missals, one printed and one written, "a pair of small organs," &c. There was much lead, for half the choir was leaded and one of the chapels. The rents only came to 26s. 8d. Again the chalice was taken by the Visitor, with six spoons, 16oz. in all.

The mention of pairs of candlesticks only is interesting as showing that the present Roman custom of a multiplicity of candles above the altar is a modern development and was not the custom in the pre-Reformation Church of England.

Next day he was at Newcastle-under-Lyme. He found it hopelessly insolvent. It owed £14, for which all its substance was in pledge, yet was insufficient to meet the debt. The inventory was again signed by the town officials, John Lymforde, Mayor; and Thomas Brodsha and Richard Smyth. The Inventory of the goods showed that in the vestry there were "suits" of blue silk, of silk with roses, and of green silk. There were eleven chasubles, five copes, and two old tunicles. In the choir there were two pairs of candlesticks of copper and latten, one cross of copper and gilt with a "Mary and John." "A pair of organs" is mentioned and an alabaster table on the High Altar. In the steeple were two bells. In the house were two old feather beds, one old bolster, and five old coverlets, an old chest, and a green covering of say. The usual articles are mentioned in kitchen, brewhouse, hall, and buttery. The choir and cloisters were roofed with lead, and the rents came to 40s. a-year. The Bishop of Dover took possession of the chalice, which was a small one, five spoons, and "two narrow bands of masers" (14oz), but he sent up to Cromwell three boxes "of evidence," one of the King's, one of other gentlemen's, and one of the Convent's.

He wrote from Lichfield an account of his journey to that point, and supplemented it on August 13 by another letter written at Shrewsbury. He apologises for not being able to send at once all the Inventories, but he had no leisure for such work, and, moreover, his servants were ill. Perhaps they could not stand the rapidity with which he travelled, "but I trust to see youwer lordschype within a weke, and be that tyme I trust to make an ende in all walys." He continues:—"Sumwhat to certyfyte yower lordeschype of the state of such as I have receyveyd sythe that I wrote to yow to towcheynge Stafforde, the Austin Fryeres ther ys a pore howse, with small implements, no jwelles, but on lytyll chales, noled in the house, in rentes by yere lis. xiiid. The Graye Fryeres ther, halfe the quere ledeyd and a chapel, small implements, no plate but a chales and xvi. small sponys, in renttes xxvis. iiid. The Blacke Fryeres in Newcastle Underlyne, all in ruyne, and a pore howse, the quere

ledeyd and the cloeyster led redy to fall downe, the rest slate and schyngyll; in fermys by yere xls. On master Broke hathe of late fownde the menyys with the prior to gett of hym the more parte of they howseys and grownde ther by iii. leseys, and that for lytyll money; he wolde a gyve me golde to a grantteyd to hys leseys, but I toke no peny of hym nor of non other, nor non woll. Iff he have thoys leseys there ys lytyll besydes for he hathe lyberte allmost in all. Ther ys a proper wode, but he hathe all in lese. No sylver above xiii. ounce." The property had been fully mortgaged to Mr. Broke, possibly but not probably—for the general poverty of the house amply accounts for it—with a view to the threatened visit of Dr. Ingworth. But the Bishop's elaborate assertion of his superiority to bribery must have been amusing reading to Cromwell: he "doth protest too much, methinks." He was not chary of sycophancy, however. He proceeds, after describing the ruined state of the Austin Friars at Shrewsbury:—"My synguler good lorde, I beseche youe pardon me of my rude wrytynge, and yf that I do not my dewte as I owte to do I beseche youe pardon me, for my hart and intente ys to do that thyng that shulbe specyally plesse God, the Kynges Grace, and yower lordschype, accordeynge to my dewte." He then goes on to "beseche" his Lordship, the son of the drunken brewer, "that yf before my cumynge there be any order taken for Newcastle Underlyne that ye wolde be good lorde to on Master Bothe, a servant of the Kynges graces, the whyche is a grett bylder in theys partes; for there ys no other to be don with the more parte of that howse, but save the lede and the slate, and take the profete of the grownde. That Master Bothe for yower sake shenyd me many plesures and gave me venyson; wherfor I may no lesse do but wryght to yower lordeschype besecheynge yow to be good lorde to hym, an I ever yower orator to Jhesu, who preserve yower lordschype."

In this year Bishop Lee issued a series of injunctions to the clergy of the diocese. In these he ordered sermons to be preached at least quarterly in "all monasteries." There were few remaining by the end of the year, and only one—Burton-on-Trent, in Staffordshire. No monks or friars were to have any "cure or servyce," "except they be lawfully dispensed withall or licensed by the ordinary." Confessions to monks and friars were forbidden, though ordered to be made to parish priests, before Communion, and the wearing of secular dress was sternly condemned. Bishop Shaxton's injunctions the same year to the diocese of Salisbury were much more severe on the religious, and included also condemnation of offerings at shrines, images, and relics.

The sales of the confiscated goods took place in 1539. They were conducted by John Scudamore, "Receiver General unto the King's Majesty of the dissolved possessions" in Staffordshire and elsewhere. He received his authorization on August 23, 1538, from Sir Richard Riche, the Solicitor-General and Chancellor of Augmentations. His instructions were to survey all the lands of surrendered houses and to make a return of their yearly value, with such pensions and corrodies, &c. as they might be burdened with. The bells and superfluous houses were to be sold, and the lead melted into "pokes" and sows and marked with the Royal mark, and delivered under indenture to the constables of neighbouring castles. On September 27, 1539, the goods of both houses at Stafford were sold, on October 4 the Friary at Lichfield, on the 15th Scudamore was at Croxden, and next day at Rocester; on the 21st he was at Hulton. The details of all these sales are extant, and are full of interest.

They bear out the well-known description of such scenes which Sir Henry Ellis printed long ago, written by one whose father and uncle had been eye witnesses. "It would have made a heart of flint to have melted and wept to have seen the breaking-up of the house. . . . Every person had everything good cheap, except the poor monks, friars, and nuns that had no money to bestow of anything. . . . Persons . . . went in and took what they found, filched it away. Some took the service books that were in the church, and laid them upon their wain coppes to piece the same; some took windows and hid them in the hay, and likewise they did of many other things; for some pulled forth the iron hooks out of the walls, that bought none, when the yeomen and gentlemen of the county had bought the timber of the church. . . . It would have pitied any heart to see what tearing-up of the lead there was and plucking up of boards and throwing down the sparres, and when the lead was torn off and cast down into the church, and the tombs of the church [were] all broken (for in most Abbeys were diverse noble men and women), and all things of price either spoiled, carped away, or defaced to the uttermost. . . . Every person bent himself to filch and spoil what he could . . . which is a strange thing to say that they could one day think it the house of God and the next day the house of the devil."

The sales were evidently conducted in a most disorderly and wasteful way, as Robert Burgoyne, who acted as auditor at the sales at Stafford, testified. He told Scudamore, "I have sold in some fire houses all the buyldyngs, the cause was for that they were so spoyled and torne by suche as sold the goodes that in manner they were downe, and yff they shuld nott have ben sold the Kyng shuld have hadd nothyng theroff."

Although there had been loud discontent at the threatened dissolution of the Friaries at Stafford, the townspeople did not hesitate to profit by the sales any more than the country people did in the case of the Monasteries. They knew that the end of the alms and easy rents had come, and it was only human nature to make the best of the sorry business. The town bought the stone wall of the Grey Friars and a pair of candlesticks at Stafford; and the churchwardens a Corporas. The "warden of the sayd [Grey] Fryers" bought two brass pots for eight shillings and six plates for 2s.; the under-bailiff and the late warden of the Friars bought "iii. leads, one to brue in, and ii. to kele in, fates, iii. tubbes, a bulting hutche, and a knedyng troughe" for 14s. 7d. Friar Wood bought a vestment of blue fustian and one of white diaper for 6d., and the Prior of the Austin Friars bought a vestment of white bustion for 8d. The Friars were determined to make the best of things. Robert Whytgreve bought books. The great purchaser was James Luson, a dealer from Wolverhampton, who followed the sales. At the sale of the Grey Friars in Stafford he purchased 'a table of alabaster standyng in the church for 2s. 8d., and "all the churche and quyer, with all edyfyngs and buyldynges within the precinct of the Fryers Minours surrenderyd, with all the stone, tymber, tyle, glasse, and iron in the same, ledd and belles only exceptyd, and also exceptyd and reservyd the stone wall next unto the towne of Stafford" for £29 1s. 8d. At the Austin Friars he bought a vestment and two tunacles "of bawdekyn with images of our lady" for 18d., two copes, "greene and yelowe partye colouryd and rewyd," for 22d., and, with Thomas Picto and Richard Warde, "all the tyle, shyngle, tymber, stone, glass, and iron, one marble gravestone, the pavements of the church, quyer and chapelles, with rode lofte, the pyctures of Cryst, Mary, and Johan, beyng in the church and chauncell of the Austin Fryers, besides the town of Stafford surrendrvd, with all other superfluos edyfyes and buyldynges within the precynct of the seyde Fryers, to be taken down, defaycd, and caryed away by the seyde Loveson, Picto, and Ward, at there owne proper costs and charges." for £28 8s. 4d. The two bells at the former house, one a Sanctus bell and one "by estimation Xth," were also placed in his custody. Sir Richard Rich wrote to Scudamore "to assingne and apoynt unto my ffrende James Lewson the five bellis remaynyng at the late monasterie of Wenlocke." The High Altar in the church of the Austin Friars at Stafford was sold for 3 shillings. Robert Dorynton was another dealer. At the Austin Friars at Stafford he purchased "a table in the inner hall with ii. trestylles and iii. formes," and at the Grey Friars, Stafford, he bought

a "gret basen" from the Buttery, 3 altar cloths, the seats in St. Francis Chapel, books in library and vestry, a coffer in the former, four pennyworth of "old wexe," and a lamp. Robert Wetwode, the Master of the Guild, bought "the table at the hyeghe deske" in the hall for 8d. The whole of the kitchen goods sold for 22s. 2d., of the church, 55s. 8d., of the brewhouse 15s., and of the hall 3s. 4d. The total sales of goods and buildings fetched £34 3s. 10d. The lead upon choir and chapel 45 feet broad "of bothe sydes" by 43 feet long, was left in the custody of the town bailiffs. The contents of the Austin Friars fetched 79s., and Robert Burgoyne, the auditor, kept "one playne crosse of copper with a lytle image of Cryst sylver apou hyt," estimated to be worth 3s. 4d., John Scudamore kept "one lytle wooden crosse," which is noted as being "platyd over verry thyn with sylver," and as being worth only 12d. "Ther remaynyth in the steple one belle, by estimation Xcth in the custody of Thomas Picto, worth by estimation viiili., and a lytle bell worth 8s.

The "*prisors jurati*," or sworn valuers, were Robert Ryve, William Colman, Marke Wyrley, and Thomas Fanne. The Grey Friars house at Lichfield was sold on October 4. Mr. Strete made a great purchase of "all the copes, vestments, and tynakles in gros for xls.," also two candlesticks of latten, for 8d., the paving tiles in the cloisters for 40s., and of the choir for 13s. 4d. Thomas Fanne, above-mentioned, bought "the bryck wall at the churche ende" for 2s.; Marke Wyrley "a fryer's masse boke" for 4d.; and William Colman "the glasse that ys lewse in the newe logging" for 3s. The Warden of the Guild bought a vestry press, "the cundyt of ledd in the cloyster," "all the kechyn stuff," and "ii. standert candelstyckes." Mr. Lytleton bought "the cesterne of ledd standyng in the porche at the Tenys Court ende," and "a lytle porche standyng by the dwellyng house." The whole of the buildings were sold to a "ring" of eight purchasers for £42 13s. 4d., "except and reservyd ledd, belles, pavement, and gravestones within all the seyd buyldynges, save only the pavement of the seyd churche, whyche ys parcell of the seyd bargayne and hath day to deface the steple, cloyster, and quyer forth [with], wyth the churche, onles they obteyne lycens otherwyse of the Kyng and hys counsell althysyde the feast of the Purification of our Lady next commyng, and for all the residewe of the buyldynges iii. yeres day to pull downe and carye away, and to have egresse and regresse for the same." These careful stipulations that the buildings should be defaced and destroyed show that the ruin of the monastic buildings is not to be attributed to the ravages of time alone, but also to wilful and deliberate vandalism.

The sale at Croxden took place on October 15. Mr. Bassett, who looked to have the place by Cranmer's good offices, purchased the "lytle gatehouse on the north syde of the comyn wey," the loft under the organ, "the lytle smythes forge," and the roof of the dormitory. He paid for the latter only. The whole sale only produced £9 9s. 8d. The sale at Rocester next day was short and speedy, as nothing was sold save St. Michael's Chapel. John Forman bought "the glasse and iron in the wyndowes" for 3s. 4d.; William Loghtonhouse the timber of the same chapel for 7s. 6d.; and William Bagnall "the shyngle" for 8d., the total proceeds being 11s. 6d. The parishioners obtained the three bells because they had been rung for their services as well as for those of the canons.* At Hulton, on October 21, the only item was the unusual one of the bells. With the lead they were generally sent to London. The three were sold to Stephen Bagott, gentleman, for £19 16s., "after the rate of xviii. the hundredd." The Augmentation Accounts also show receipts from the sales at the other religious houses.

As the agents went about their work they looked to be well treated by all who desired their favour, and their path was strewn with bribes and gifts from prospective makers of easy bargains. Robert Burgoyne, who had acted as auditor at Stafford, sent Scudamore a buck: "good Mr. Giffard kyllid yt for you yesterdaye." Another time he is told a hostess "hadd provyded a flat swane for you." Master Bothe, the "grett bylder," who hoped for a good bargain in regard to the Friary at Newcastle-under-Lyme, was careful to "show Bishop Ingworth many pleasures." Fault was found with William Cavendish, who had accompanied Legh to Brewood, Stafford, Dieulacres, and elsewhere, for having given higher "rewards and wages" than he had divulged. These were probably intended as bribes, for while riding back from Merivale in Warwickshire they learnt that the Abbot had not sold some plate as he said he had done. They accordingly despatched a messenger back to fetch it, and the Abbot sent it by way of bribe to them "to be good masters unto him and his brethren." Both Cavendish and Legh confessed that the whole story was true.

As was to be expected, much of the spoil did not reach the Royal treasure house without a good deal of trouble. The lead was to be melted into "plokcs" and sows, weighed, and marked with the King's marks, and delivered under indenture to the constables of neighbouring castles, such as Tutbury. But so long afterwards as the reign of Mary, John Scudamore was being called upon for the settlement of his accounts. The following letter was addressed

* See *Notes*, page 168.

to him from Westminster on February 30, 1555 :—
 “After our harty comendacions, theise may be to advertise you that we have perused the indentures made betwyxte Mr. Sheldon and you, and accordyng to the tenure of the same have charged the sayd master Sheldon with all the leade, bell metalle, and redy money mencyoned and conteigned in the sayed indenture, which beyng deducted oute of your charge, yett there dothe remayne to be aunsweryd by you bothe leade and bell metalle as ffollowythe, that ys to saye :—For leade att Rocestre, vi. ff.; Croxden, xliii. ff. de.; Delacres, iiii. ff.; Tuttberye, vi. ff., i. quarter; *nuper prioratus canoniorum de Stafford*, xliiii., ff.; the celle of Dudley, iiii. ff.; ffor the aunswere whereof we requyer you, by the vertue of the Kynge and Quene’s Majesties comyssyon to us directed, that wythe as convenyente spede as you may after the receyte hereof sende unto us youre suffycyente deputie to accompte byfore us for the same, so as hereuppon their Majesties may be satisfied by you of the dett that shall faul out uppon the same. And bycause we be moche callyd uppon to reporte youre estate and dett herein, we therefore are constrayned the more earnestly to call uppon you, whome we dought not wylle have such regarde hereunto as bothe their Majesties expectacyon herein may be served (as ys mete), as also for the full ende of this charge towards your selfe, with which as before the ende ys troublesome and comberous unto you, so will the ende thereof be to your quyetnes and comforte. Whereof, for that you are ouer oulde ffrende and of oulde acquayntaunce, we thought to advyse you the rather for that comyssyon ys nowe oute for the ende of those causys, of which you nowe may be dyscharged yf the faulte be not in your selfe. We also advertyse you that Mr. Sheldon wylbe no further charged concernynge the leade and belles within your circuyte there thenne ys conteyned in the indentures bytwyxe you and hym; and, therefore, you muste aunswere the reste your selfe, whereunto we dought not but you wyl have such respecte as we may receyve your aunswere withe expedycion.”

Among those who were not ashamed to beg for Monastic spoils, we have already seen lords and bishops. Bishop Roland Lee continued his tale of pleading with increased fervour. St. Thomas, Stafford, had evidently made a good fight for life against his repeated efforts to get it suppressed. It had paid £133 6s. 8d. for continuance, and the Bishop was very sore about it. He even suspected Legh of playing him false. The latter, however assured him he was as interested in the suppression of the house as the Bishop himself was, though he advised an application direct for the grant of the house. “I have spoken,” he says, “to Mr. Strete

for the suppression of St. Thomas's, but I would your lordship should write to my Lord Privy Seal (Cromwell) for your own matter, and to thank him, for he told me he would move the King for you and your heirs to have St. Thomas's, and no doubt the King will be content, and, indeed, it is all one. Remember to write to my lord to put away sinister suspicion, and be not light of credit against me: mistrust without cause is very unpleasant." Thus encouraged, Lee returned to the charge, adding fresh inducements. He suggests that the longer the matter is delayed the less there will be to confiscate, "as the Prior makes unreasonable waste." He asks that the Priory may be let to him "at an easy rent, that the poor boys, my nephews, may have some relief thereby;" and he begs that Cromwell will write to the surveyors that he may buy what things belonging to the house he desires. The latter request, as we have seen, he obtained. Again, on December 13, he wrote to Cromwell on the same subject. He even ventured to apply direct to the King, both in person and by letter. There is a letter of his written to the King on December 26, which says, "Where at my being with your Majesty, I moved the same for the late Priory of St. Thomas, I was minded to pay a certain sum as your grace should determine. I am so much bound to your Majesty that I can crave no more; but, being charged with eight poor children of my sister's, now fatherless and motherless, I am forced to show the truth."

Archbishop Cranmer pursued the same petty policy of harring the monks out of existence, and of paltry petitions for his friends right through the whole period. As long ago as 1535 he had begged for the Priory of Worcester to be given to one of the monks of Burton. On December 14, 1538, he wrote to Cromwell to accomplish his suit for his servant the bearer, Francis Bassett, who had carried the image of St. Modwen up to London, for the Monastery of Croxden. Among Cromwell's notes there is "A remembrance to speak to the King for Francis Bassett, servant to my lord of Canterbury:" "The ferme of Musden Grawnge, appertaining to the Abbey of Crocksden, within the county of Stafford, being of the yearly value of 20 marks by the year." Erdeswick says Croxden was granted to Geoffrey Foljambe, a gentleman of doubtful character. He left it to his bastard son, Geoffrey, who sold it, and all other lands his father had left him.

A deeply interesting study would be that of tracing out the history of the dispossessed monks and nuns. Unfortunately, the materials are of the scantiest. All in theory and some in fact obtained pensions. The augmentation accounts show payments of pensions to the Prior of Tutbury in 1538,

and to monks of Burton-on-Trent in 1540: John Pole, Robert Robynson, Robert Heithcott, William Fysshier, John Goodcole, William Symon, and Humphrey Cotton; and a payment of £20 to the Prior of Stone on October 18, 1538. But we have no means of knowing how long or how regularly the pensions were paid. They were to cease when the recipient obtained any preferment of equal value.

If the history of the dissolution of the religious houses in France in our own days in any way reproduces that of the dissolution in England in the 16th century, many of the religious were obliged to take up secular employment. Did the Friars of Stafford make their purchases with the object of carrying on the business of brewing? Besides "ii brasse pottes" in the kitchen they bought out of their brewhouse "iii leads"—i.e., pans, "one to brue [brew] in," and "ii. to kele [cool] in" (i.e., "coolers"); besides "fates," which Cowell's *Interpreter* explains as the vessels, each containing a quarter, used to measure malt, a "bultyng hutch" or sifting tub, and "a knedyng troughe." The prospect for the nuns, turned adrift in a world whose moral sense had been shaken by the accusations lately brought against the inmates of the religious houses, and among people whose betters were described by Legh as living "so incontinently having their concubines openly in their houses, with five or six of their children, putting from them their wyfes, that all the contrey therewith be not a littill offendyd and takithe evyll example of theym," must have been terrible. The last Abbot of Rocester appears to have continued to live near his destroyed house, if the entry in the earliest volume of the Rocester parish registers—"1576, Aug. 14, Willm. Grafton, prs. . . . sep."—records his burial. The last Prior of Trentham was Thomas Bradwall, and a "Thos. Bradwall, s. of John B.," was buried at Trentham on March 13, 1567.

The First Act of Dissolution ordered that the new owners were "to kepe or cause to be kept an honest contynewell hous and houshold in the same cyte or precynct, and to occupye yerely as moche of the same demeanes in plowyng and tyllage of husbandry, that ys to saye as moche of the seid demeanes which hath ben commonly used to be kept in tyllage by the governors, abbottes, or pryours of the same howses, monasteryes, or pryoryes." But how far this wise and equitable provision was carried, or even intended to be carried, into effect has been seen by the deliberate arrangements which were made with the purchasers of the Friaries at Stafford and Lichfield, to take down, deface, and remove most of the buildings, even though it might be the work of three years; and is further seen in the licence which the Duke of Suffolk, the grantee of Trentham, obtained immediately to "impark" five hundred acres of land there. The

new owners indeed seldom occupied the land themselves. The greater ones sub-let them, and lesser and greater alike speculated briskly with them. Sutcote, the "server of the Kingis Grace Chamber," who obtained the Cistercian Nunnery at Brewood, just over the Staffordshire border, in a high-handed manner, had no sooner done so than he "offerd hyt to dyvers to selle for suche a price that no man will gladly by hit at hys hand." Trentham was only surrendered in 1536, yet in December, 1538, the Duke of Suffolk obtained by exchange a grant of the rents and reversions reserved upon the Crown leases there, and many cottages, lands, and advowsons; and at the same time procured a licence to alienate. He sold it to James Leveson in 1540. It is evident that any inquiry into the original grants of the lands of the religious houses would throw little light upon the permanent results of the transfer of the monastic property. It would indicate at best who were the shrewdest bargainers and the readiest speculators.

Sir Simon Degge called attention in 1662 to the remarkable way the Church property in Staffordshire had changed hands. "Abbey Hilton, &c., that was given in exchange to Sir Edward Ashton, was, with much more, sold by his son. . . . Dieulacres was given to the Bagnals, which, like a mushroom, rose on a sudden and vanished as soon in the first generation. . . . Calwich is next in order, bought by Sir Richard Fleetwood's grandfather; how unhappily it prospered with the grandson you have seen; and the children of that family have been unfortunate. Roucester was granted to Thomas Trentham [Tanner says Richard Trentham], whose son Francis soon after so settled it that [neither] he nor any of his sons could alienate it, which, if any of them had had power to have done it had been gone; and now it is got into a strange family, where it is believed it will not stay half another age. Croxden is next, which one of the Fuljams had, and died a beggar in a barn, after he had sold it to Sergeant Harris, who had a hopeful son, who died soon after the purchase by which it came into a strange family. Tutbury was old Mr. Cavendish's, the common bull of Derbyshire and Staffordshire, yet died issueless; that still continues in his name; so doth Burton; but the son of him that purchased it from the Crown died attainted of treason. The father of this Lord Paget repurchased it at £700 a-year rent; and how this has much wasted his estate, no body knows how. Canwell, you know, has changed its master twice in our time. But to come to Trentham. There have been two successive owners, who are both like to die issueless. How Stone hath prospered, both in the Colliers' and Cromptons' hands, you have and will see." John Voysey, *alias* Harman, Bishop

of Exeter, had made purchases to Canwell which had been suppressed by Wolsey, but in Erdeswicke's time it had been sold out of the family. On the other hand, the Giffards continued to hold Brewood. The Collegiate churches of Penkridge and Wolverhampton passed to John Duke of Northumberland, who was beheaded for high treason in 1553. Charles Duke of Suffolk obtained thirty religious houses, including Trentham, and though he married four times his direct descendants failed in the next generation.

The general effects and results of the Suppression of the Religious Houses belong to general history and need not be discussed here. The main results as they made themselves felt in Staffordshire may, however, be briefly noted.

The development of monasticism in the county had not only gone hand in hand with, but had materially furthered civilization, culture, and material and spiritual progress. The lands round Burton centuries ago had become well-ordered estates and populous villages, while beside the Abbey walls a flourishing town had existed for generations. The idea seems to have been entertained of founding a great College and School in the Abbey buildings, but it never took shape except on paper. The Cistercian houses at Dieulacres and Croxden had long been owners of vast sheep walks and flourishing farms, but the men who speculated in them at the dissolution were hard landlords and generally absentees. Material poverty was severe, and until the discovery of its mineral wealth Staffordshire was one of the most backward counties in England. Spiritual destitution was equally marked. The isolated chapels served by the monks fell into decay; the parish churches by no means recovered their tithes when lay owners supplanted the monasteries. The injustice to the parishes concerned had been serious when the religious houses had held the greater tithes of the rectories, placing a vicar to perform the services at a small stipend. It became much greater at the dissolution, for the lords of the manors usually took advantage of the opportunity to purchase the tithes from the Crown and so avoid the trouble and loss which was involved by payment in kind. But the vicars they appointed were usually far worse than those appointed by the monasteries. Patrons often appointed their servants to benefices on condition that the bulk of the endowment was surrendered. Hooper, in a visitation of his diocese of Gloucester in 1552, found 168 priests who could not say the Ten Commandments, and over 30 who did not know the Author of the Lord's Prayer. Superstition revived in the wild northern districts; the fairies of Cauldon Lowe once more recovered their hold on popular imagination; and a clear field was opened for the Jesuit missionaries in later days to

preach their religion of treason. Not only religion but morality itself reeled under the blow struck at the monastic system. Even Dr. Legh was shocked not merely at the ignorance of "the rude and poore people," but at the open profligacy of "the knyghtes and gentilmen" in Staffordshire; which was far worse than the vulgar sacrilege with which they treated sacred things and sacred buildings.

APPENDIX I.

DRAFT COMMISSION TO THOMAS ABBOT OF FORDE.
P.R.O., State Papers, Hen. VIII., Fol. Vol. R. and S.,
 165.

Henry the eyethe by the grace of gode kyng of Ingelande and of Fraunce defensor of the fayeth and lorde of Yrelande sende gretynge | For as moche as hytt ys Requysytte and thawrth to be most expedyent thordre and Relygyon of Cystenace [*sic.* ? Christians] to be visyted and Reformyde by Auctorite hade of vs wyrth in thys or Realme of Ingelande and nott be Auctorite hade from beyende the seys for dyv'se cosyderacons hade in the same We tenderyng the good cotynewaunce and mayntaynyng of all man' catholique Religyon Firmely pceyvynge the indyfferensy dexterite and goode vertuous qualytyes and divine lernyng wyche manyfestely hathe and dothe appere in owre trusty and welbeloyde Fadre in gode Thomas Abbott of Forde wherefore we name institute and ordeyne the sayde Abbott of Forde from hense Forde to be visitor Reformer and inquysitor of that Religion duryng hys naturall lyffe of all thos monasterys whos namys Folowyth Any comyssyon or comyssyons here tofore graunted to the contrary nott wyethstandyng that ys to vnderstande, Forde, Buckefaste, Buckel- ande, Dunckewell, Newham, Clyve, Byndon, Tarraunte, Bewley, Quarre, Letteley, Wav'ley, Rewley, Stanley, Haylys, Bordeley, Kyngewoode, Flaxley, Stratteford, Boxley, Crokedene, Combremeare, Cockehall, Brewern, Garydon, Bedyllsden, Combe, Stoneley, Merevalle, and Thame | Farther we wyll and straytely comande that no other psone or psons of what Estade degre or dygnite so ev' he or they be but only the sayde Abbott of Forde or his depute do visett Reforme Inquyre or intermelle in any man' wyse in any of the sayde monsterys afore Rehersyd nor wt any Religyous psone or psons of the same And ferther we wyll [lined through in original] duryng the natrall lyffe of the sayde Abbott of Forde whon we ordayne and depute visitor Reformer Inquysytor as before rehersid More ov' we give and graunte and by thes presente we auctorisatt the foresayde Abbott of Forde to destitute and institute any Abbott or Abbotts fro tyme to tyme wtyn all and ev'y of the Foresayde monsterys as the lawys and Rewlys of the sayde ordre dothe and wyll pmytte | And for hys Farther assystence in all and syngler the p'miss and for executyng of the same we wyll and straytely comaunde by vertew of thes or comyssyon all shreffys Mayrys baylyffys Constablys Justyce and all other

or offycers in all and ev'y shere and libertie [as far as any of thos Abbeys before namyde doth extende and for the executyng of this or Auctorite comyttide and gevyn to the foresayde Abbott of Ford] they and ev'y of them to Assyste the fore sayde Abbott of Forde att all tymys and att any tyme that they or any of them shalbe requyred by the sayd abbott of Forde or his depute in and a bouthe any of the monstreys before Rehersyde in advoydyng or hyeth dyspleasure. And this or comyssion and graunte we wyll to cotynewe in vigour and strengyth.

[Attached to this document is a paper containing a longer list of monasteries covering three sides, of which those above-named fill the first side. Some Welsh houses are included.]

II.

EXAMPLE OF A LICENCE TO CONTINUE, GRANTED TO A "LESSER MONASTERY."

*Patent Roll (Chancery), 29 Henry VIII., Part 3,
Mem. 23 (18).*

DE RENOUACIONE MONASTERII DE CROXDON.;

Rex omnibus ad quos etc. salutem. Cum per quendam actum in parlamento nostro apud London tercio die Novembris anno regni nostri vicesimo primo inchoato et deinde usque Westmonasterium adiornato et per diversas prorogaciones usque ad et in quartum diem Februarii anno regni nostri vicesimo septimo continuato et tunc ibidem tento inter alia inactitatum existit quod nos haberemus et gauderemus nobis ac heredibus nostris imperpetuum omnia et singula monasteria Prioratus ac alias domos Religiosas Monachorum Canonicorum et Monialium quibuscumque generibus sine diversitatibus habituum Regularum siue ordinum vocarentur siue nominarentur que non habebant terras tenementa redditus decimas porciones et alia hereditamenta ultra clarum annum ducentarum librarum dicti annualis claris valoris dictorum Monasteriorum ac Prioratum capiendi ac construendi secundum clarum valorem in Scaccario nostro certificatum Et simili modo quod haberemus et gauderemus nobis ac heredibus nostris omnes et omnimodi sectas [*sic.* (? scitos)] et circuitus eorundem Religiosarum domorum ac omnia et singula Maneria grangeas mesuagia terras tenementa reversiones redditus servicia decimas penciones porciones advocaciones patronatus ecclesiarum Capellarum annuitates iura intraciones condiciones et alia hereditamenta quecumque eisdem Monasterio Prioratibus siue domibus Religiosis non habentibus ut predicitur terras tenementa vel hereditamenta ultra predictum annum valorem ducentarum librarum pertinentia siue spectantia adeo plene et integre prout Abbates Priores Abbatisse ac alii gubernatores huiusmodi Monasteriorum Prioratum et aliarum Religiosarum domorum adtunc habuerunt illa aut habere debuerunt in iure domorum suarum habendum et tenendum omnia et singula premissa cum omnibus suis iuribus proficuis jurisdictionibus et commoditatibus nobis heredibus et successoribus nostris imperpetuum ad inde faciendum et utendum nostras proprias voluntates Cumque eciam in actu predicto provideatur quod nos aliquo et quocumque tempore post confectionem actus illius valeamus et potuissemus ad beneplacitum nostrum ordinare constituere et declarare per literas nostras patentes sub magno sigillo

nostro conficiendas quod ille et tales huiusmodi predictarum domorum Religiosarum quas supprimendas et dissoluendas esse noluissemus essent perseuerarent starent continuarent et permanerent in eisdem suis corporibus corporatis ac in eisdem suis essentialibus statu qualitate condicione robore et effectum tam in possessionibus quam aliter prout essent et fuissent ante confeccionem actus predicti absque suppressione siue dissolutione earundem aut alicuius partis inde pretextu et auctoritate eiusdem actus Et quod quilibet talis huiusmodi ordinacio et declaracio per nos sic fienda et ordinanda esset bona secuta et effectualis Capitalibus gubernatoribus huiusmodi Religiosarum domorum quas supprimendas et dissoluendas esse noluissemus et successoribus suis iuxta et secundum tenores et effectus literarum patencium inde conficiendarum aliqua re siue aliquibus rebus in actu predicto incontrarium inde facto non obstante prout in actu predicto inter alia plenius continetur pretextu cuiusquidem actus Monasterium siue, Abbacia beate Marie de Croxdon Covent' et Lich diocesis in Comitatu nostro Staffordie pro eo quod non habet terras tenementa redditus decimas porciones aut hereditamenta ultra dictum clarum annuum valorem ducentarum librarum prout certificatur in dicto Scaccario nostro et ibidem plene liquet in manibus et dispositione nostris iam existit utrum dissolveretur secundum formam et effectus actus predicti an permaneret et continuaret in suo pristino et essentiali statu condicione et qualitate prout ante confeccionem actus predicti fuit. Nos volentes dictum Monasterium siue Abbaciam beate Marie de Croxdon predictam pro diuersis causis et considerationibus nos ad presens specialiter mouentibus in suo pristino essentiali statu corpore condicione et qualitate permanere et continuare prout ante confeccionem actus predicti fuit ac prout esset si actus ille factus non fuisset. Sciatis igitur quod nos ob fauorem quem erga Monasterium siue Abbaciam beate Marie de Croxdon predictam quod non extenditur in terras tenementis et aliis hereditamentis suis ad annum valorem ducentarum librarum in Comitatu predicto ordinis Cistriciensis Couen et [sic.] diocesis gerimus et habemus. Et ut Abbas et Religiose persone eiusdem Monasterii siue Abbacie diuino cultu ibidem celebrando deuocius intendant hospitalitatem ac alia pietatis opera ibidem uberius excerceant de gratia nostra speciali ac excerta sciencia et mero motu nostris ordinauimus constituimus et declarauimus erigimus et renouamus quod predictum Monasterium siue Abbacia beate Marie de Croxdon predicta imperpetuum continuabit stabit et permanebit in eodem suo corpore corporato ac in eodem suo essentiali statu gradu qualitate et condicione tam in possessionibus quam in omnibus aliis rebus tam spiritualibus quam temporalibus et mixtas [sic.] prout fuit tempore confeccionis actus predicti

aut aliquo tempore ante confeccionem actus predicti absque suppressione sine dissolutione aliquali eiusdem Monasterii siue Abbacie beate Marie de Croxdon predicta aut alicuius partis vel parcelle inde vigore et auctoritate actus predicti Et ulterius de uberiori gratia nostra speciali concessimus et per presentes concedimus quod Thomas Chawner professor ordinis Cistriciensis sit deinceps Abbas dicti Monasterii siue Abbacie beate Marie de Croxdon predicta ac pro Abbate et Capitali gubernatore eiusdem Monasterii siue Abbacie beate Marie de Croxdon predicta deinceps habeatur reputetur et acceptetur eisdem modo et forma qualitate gradu condicione dignitate et robore prout dictus Thomas quarto die Februarii anno regni nostri vicesimo septimo aut antea fuit. Et quod omnes alie Religiose persone eiusdem Monasterii siue Abbacie beate Marie de Croxdon predicta modo existentes aut que quarto die Februarii dicto. Anno vicesimo septimo ibidem fuerunt et iam a dicto Conuentu non separantur sint decetero et deinceps Conuentus eiusdem Monasterii siue Abbacie beate Marie de Croxdon predicta ac pro Conuentu eiusdem Monasterii siue Abbacie beate Marie de Croxdon predicta deinceps habeantur reputentur et acceptentur eisdem modo et forma qualitate condicione et statu prout dicto quarto die Februarii dicto anno regni nostri vicesimo septimo aut antea fuerunt. Et quod predictus Thomas et Religiose persone predictae et omnes successores sui imperpetuum habeant et habebunt huiusmodi et eandem successionem in omnibus et per omnia prout ante dictum quartum diem Februarii dicto anno vicesimo septimo habuerunt et habere debuerunt ac prout habuissent et habere debuissent valuissent et potuissent si actus predictus factus non fuisset Et quod predictus Thomas per nomen Abbatis dicti Monasterii siue Abbacie beate Marie de Croxdon predicta et successores sui Abbates dicti monasterii siue Abbacie beate Marie de Croxdon predicta sint deinceps persone habiles implacitare et implacitari in omnibus sectis placitis querelis accionibus petitionibus tam realibus quam personalibus et mixtis et aliis quibuscumque in quibuscumque Curiis et locis ac coram quibuscumque Iudicibus siue Justiciariis tam spiritualibus quam temporalibus licet tangat nos heredes aut successores nostros et ad faciendum excercendum et exequendum omnia et singula alia quecumque ut Abbates dicti Monasterii siue Abbacie beate Marie de Croxdon predicta fecissent et facere potuissent ante confeccionem actus predicti Ac prout fecissent et facere potuissent si idem actus minime factus et editus fuisset. Et quod predictus Abbas et Religiose persone predictae ut Abbas et Conuentus Monasterii siue Abbacie beate Marie de Croxdon predicta et successores sui Abbates et Conuentus Monasterii siue Abbacie illius habeant gaudeant et teneant ac habere possint et valeant imperpetuum totum predictum.

Monasterium siue Abbaciam beate Marie de Croxdon predicta necnon ecclesiam Campanalia scitum Cimiterium fundum ambitum precinctum et circuitum ecclesie eiusdem ac omnia et singula Maneria terras tenementa redditus reversiones servicia possessiones penciones perpetuitates et hereditamenta nostra quecumque necnon commoditates ornamenta iocalia bona et catalla et alias res quascumque tam spirituales quam temporales eidem Monasterio siue Abbacie quouismodo spectantia siue pertinentia modo et forma prout haberent gauderent et tenerent aut habere gaudere et tenere potuissent et valerent si actus predictus factus et editus non fuisset. Et pro maiore securitate de et in premissis prefatis Abbati et Conuentui Monasterii siue Abbacie beate Marie de Croxdon predicta et successoribus suis adhibenda Sciatis insuper quod nos de uberiori gratia nostra speciali dedimus et concessimus ac per presentes damus et concedimus prefato Abbati dicti Monasterii siue Abbacie beate Marie de Croxdon predicta et Conuentui eiusdem loci et successoribus suis totum dictum Monasterium siue Abbaciam beate Marie de Croxdon predicta necnon totum situm fundum ambitum precinctum et circuitum ecclesiam Campanile et Cimiterium eiusdem Monasterii siue Abbacie beate Marie de Croxdon predicta ac omnia et singula domos Maneria mesuagia terras tenementa boscos subboscos redditus reversiones servicia feoda Militum Warda maritagia relevia escaeta parcos warrenas stagna vivaria piscarias communas Rectorias vicarias advocaciones et patronatus ecclesiarum Capellarum et Cantuariarum terras glebas penciones porciones decimas oblationes Curias letas visus franci plegii libertates iurisdictiones franchisesias et alia iura possessiones et hereditamenta quecumque ac omnia bona et catalla Campanas iocalia ornamenta et alia quecumque eidem Monasterio siue Abbacie beate Marie de Croxdon predicta nuper spectantia siue pertinentia Et que predictus Abbas et Conventus quarto die Februarii dicto anno vicesimo septimo aut antea vel postea in iure Monasterii siue Abbacie illius habuerunt tenuerunt vel gauisi fuerunt Et que ad manus nostras ratione et pretextu actus predicti devenerunt et devenire debuerunt adeo plene et integre et in tam amplis modo et forma prout dicti Abbas et Conventus dicto quarto die Februarii dicto Anno vicesimo septimo et ante faccionem actus predicti in iure Monasterii siue Abbacie predictae illa habuerunt tenuerunt vel gauisi fuerunt et adeo plene et integre ac in tam amplis modo et forma prout illa ratione pretextu vigore et auctoritate actus predicti ad manus nostras devenerunt et devenire debuerunt aut in manibus nostris iam existunt vel existere debent. Habendum tenendum et gaudendum predictum Monasterium siue Abbaciam beate Marie de Croxdon predicta ac omnia et singula cetera premissa cum suis iuribus pertinentiis et commoditatibus uniuersis

prefato Thome Abbati dicti Monasterii siue Abbacie illius et Conuentui eiusdem loci et successoribus suis in puram et perpetuam elemosinam imperpetuum de nobis et heredibus nostris de fundacione nostra et non aliter. Soluendo et faciendo Capitalibus dominis terrarum et tenementorum predictorum et ceterorum premissorum et cuiuslibet inde parcelle redditus et seruicia inde eis et eorum cuilibet debita et de iure consueta. Prouiso semper quod prefati Abbas et Conuentus unanimi consensu pro se et successoribus suis per presentes concedant nobis et heredibus nostris quod predicti Abbas et Conuentus et successores sui imperpetuum soluant aut solui faciant nobis heredibus et successoribus nostris omnes decimas et primos fructus quocienscumque euenire contigerint eodem modo et forma atsi dictum Monasterium siue Abbacia suppressum dissolutum siue datum nobis per actum predictum non fuisset | Ac secundum vim formam et effectum cuiusdam actus parlamenti pro decimis et primis fructibus editi et proiusi Et predicti Abbas et Conuentus concedunt per presentes quod ipsi et successores sui imperpetuum bene et fideliter custodiant et obseruabunt omnes et omnimodi regulas ordinaciones et statuta per nos vt supremum caput Anglicane ecclesie siue Ministros nostros et successores nostros bonum regimen dicti Monasterii sine Abbacie et Religiosorum virorum eiusdem Monasterii siue Abbacie concernencia siue tangencia imposterum prouidenda assignanda et appunctuanda. Eo quod expressa mencio etc. In cuius etc. Teste Rege apud Westmonasterium secundo die Julii.

per ipsum Regem et de dato etc.

III.

DEED OF SURRENDER OF CROKSDEN.

[*Exchequer, Augmentation Office, Deeds of Surrender, No. 66, Crokesden Abbey, Cistercians.*]

TRANSCRIPT (extended).

Omnibus Christi fidelibus ad quos presens scriptum pervenerit Nos Thomas Chalner abbas Monasterii siue Abbathie Beate Marie virginis de Crokesden in Comitatu Staff' Coven' et Lich' dioc' ordinis Cistercien' et eiusdem loci conventus Salutem in Domino sempiternam Noueritis nos prefatos abbatem et conventum vnanimi assensu et concensu nostris, animis deliberatis, certa scientia, et mero motu nostris ex quibusdam causis iustis et rationalibus nos animas et conscientias nostras spiritualiter moventibus vltro et sponte dedisse concessisse, ac per presentes damus, concedimus, reddimus, deliberamus, et confirmamus Illustrissimo et Invictissimo principi et domino nostro Henrico dei gratia Anglie et Francie Regi fidei defensori domino Hibernie ac in terris supremo ecclesie Anglicane sub Christo Capiti totum dictum monasterium siue abbathiam nostram de Crokesden, predict' ac totum scitum, fundum, circuitum, et precinctum eiusdem monasterii de Crokesden predict', Nec non omnia et singula maneria, domos, mesuagia, gardina, curtilagia, tofta, terras et tenementa, prata, pascua, pasturas, boscos, redditus, seruicia, molendina, passagia, feoda, militum, wardas, maritagia, natiuos, villanos, cum eorum sequelis, communias, libertates, franchises, iurisdictiones, officia, cur', let', hundred', visus franci pledgii, feria, mercata, parcos, warrennia, viuaria, aquas, piscarias, vias, chimina, vacuos fundos, advocaciones ecclesiarum, Hospitalium, et aliorum ecclesiasticorum beneficiorum quorumcunque, Rectorias, vicarias, cantarias, porciones, pensiones, annuitates, decimas, oblaciones, ac omnia et singula emolumenta, proficua, possessiones, hereditamenta et iura nostra quecunque, tam infra dictum Com' Staff' quam infra Com' Darby, Northampton, Lincoln' Lecestr' Cestrie, Middlesex' et alibi infra regnum Anglie, Wallie, Hibernie et marchiarum earundem eidem monasterio siue Abbathie de Crokesden quoquomodo pertinentes spectantes appendentes siue incumbentes ac omnimodas chartas, evidencias, scripta, et munimenta nostra dicto monasterio siue Abbathie ac maneriis, terris, et tenementis ac ceteris

premissis cum pertinentiis, seu alicui inde parcelle quoquomodo spectantes siue concernentes Habend', tenend' et gaudend' dictum monasterium siue Abbathiam, scitum, fundum, circuitum, et precinctum de Crokesden predicto, terras, tenementa, ac cetera premissa, cum omnibus et singulis suis pertinentiis prefato Inuictissimo Principi et Domino nostro Regi, heredibus et assignatis suis imperpetuum, cui in hac parte ad omnem iuris effectum, qui exinde sequi poterit aut potest nos et dictum monasterium siue Abbathiam de Crkesden predict', ac omnia iura nobis qualitercumque acquisata (vt decet) subiicimus et submittimus, dantes et concedentes eidem Regie maiestati heredibus et assignatis suis omnem et omnimodam plenam et liberam facultatem, auctoritatem et potestatem nos et dictum monasterium de Crokesden predicto vna cum omnibus et singulis maneriis, terris, tenementis, redditibus, reuercioibus, serviciis, et singulis premissis cum suis iuribus et pertinentiis quibuscumque disponendi ac pro suo libro regio voluntatis libito ad quoscunque vsus maiestati sue placentes alienandi, donandi, couertendi et transferendi, huiusmodi dispositiones alienaciones donaciones comuersiones et translationes, per maiestatem suam quouismodo fiend' extunc ratificantes, ratas et gratas ac perpetuo firmas habituros promittimus per presentes et ut premissa omnia et singula suum debitum sortiri valeant effectum electionibus insuper nobis ei successoribus nostris necnon omnibus querelis, proocationibus, appellacionibus, actionibus, litibus, et instanciis aliisque quibuscumque nostris remediis et beneficiis nobis forsan et successoribus nostris in ea parte pretextu dispositionis, alienacionis, translationis, et conuersionis predictarum et ceterorum premissorum qualitercumque competentibus et competituris omnibusque doli erroris metus ignorancie, vel alterius materie siue dispositionis exceptionibus obiectionibus, et allegacionibus prorsus semotis et depositis palam publice et expresse ex certa nostra scientia animisque spontaneis renunciamus et redimus et ab eisdem recedimus in hiis scriptis Et nos predict' abbas et conventus et successores nostri dictum monasterium precinctum scitum mansionem et ecclesiam de Crokesden predicto ac omnia et singula maneria, domos, mesuagia, gardina, cutilagia, tofta, prata, pascua, pasturas, boscos, subboscos, terras et tenementa ac omnia et singula cetera premissa cum suis pertinentiis vniversis prefato domoyno nostro Regi heredibus et assignatis suis contra omnes gentes warantizabimus imperpetuum per presentes In quorum premissorum fidem et testimonium Nos prefati Abbas et conventus huic scripto sigillum nostrum commune apposuiimus et propriis manibus adscripsimus dat' xviimo die mensis septembris Anno Domini millesimo quingentesimo trigesimo octavo. Anno 30 Henry VIII.

[Signatures in the margin.]

per me Thomam Chalner Abbatem de Crokesden
 „ Thomam Rolleston [Rolleston]
 „ Robertum Clarke
 „ Thomam Kelynge
 „ Johannem Thornto
 „ Johannem Orpe
 „ Johannem Almo
 „ Wylliamus Beche
 „ Henricum Rothwell
 „ Robertum Keydr
 „ Johannem Standlaw
 „ Rycardum Meyre
 „ Thomam Hendon

[Seal in good condition.]

[On the dorse]

Memorandum quod die et anno infra scripto Abbas et conventus infra nominati in domo capitulari omnes et singuli tunc ibidem congregati et capitulum facientes vnanimi eorum consensu et assensu ex certa eorum scientia animis deliberatis hoc eorum scriptum sigillo suo communi sigillatum et manibus suis propriis ad scriptum continens donationem concessionem alienationem siue sursum reddicionem ut factum suum liberum et voluntarium cognoverunt et recognoverunt ac ut factum suum commune in manibus venerabilis viri magistri Thome Legh legum doctoris commissarii ibidem domini nostri regis ad vsum ipsius illustrissimi domini Regis vltro et sponte tradebant et deliberant ac petierunt instanter ut in curia cancellarie domini nostri regis seu vbicunque alliis ut factum suum huiusmodi ad perpetuam rei memoriam irrotuleter insinuat et inscribatur et regarunt hos testes subscriptos quatenus tam super eorum facto huius modi quam sigillacione deliberatione et petitione predict' testimonium prohiberent.

Mr Georgius Vernam, armiger
 Ranoldus Corbett, armiger
 Walterus Orton, generosus
 Dominus Edmundus Stretaye.

[Enrolled on the dorse of the Close Rolls the month and year within written.]

See also *Notes to Chapter XIII.*

IV.

(*Exchequer Augmentation Office ; Miscellaneous Books, Vol. 172.*)

PRIORY OF BREWOOD.

Hereafter folowyth all suche parcelles of imple-
mentes or houshold Stuff Corne, Catell, ornamentes
of the church and such other lyke founde within
the late priory there at the tyme of the Dissolucion
of the same house Soulde by the Kinges Commis-
sioners to Thomas Gyfforde, esqr.

The Churche.

Fyrst, one table of alebaster, owlde formes and
mentes, ii. particions of carvyd woode, pavyng of the
church and quere, xxiii. panes of glas, and on mas-
boke xxs.

The Vestrye.

It' ii. payr of grene dornyng westmentes, i. olde cope
of sendall, one serples, i. alterclott and i. towell,
i. litell bell, and a sensure of latynne iiiis.

The Chapter House.

It' iii. panys of glasse and ii. long formes sould
for xiid.

Belles in the Stepull.

It' ther remayneth unsolde in the stepull iii. belles.

The Hale.

It' there ii. tabulles and a forme sould for xiid.

The Parlore.

It' i. foldyng tabulles, i. forme, i. chayre, i. cubborde,
and the hangyngs of payntyd clothe iis.

The Cheffe Chamber.

It' one fetherbedd, ii. oulde coverlettes, i. oulde
blankett, i. tester of whyght lyen clothe, ii. bed-
steddes, ii. formes, i. cubborde, one joynt chayre,
ii. oulde coffers, i. boulst', ii. pyllowis, and iiiii. payre
of sheetes xs.

The Baylyffes Chamb'.

It' one mattres, i. coverlet, one blankett, and one
axe xiid.

The Buttery.

It' ii. ale tubbes, i. oulde chest, i. borde, i. tableclothe,
and ii. candlestykyngs of latenn xiid.

The Kechyn.

It' ii. dressyngbordes, ii. stoles, i. forme, i. ladder,
i. bz [] di' of salte, iiiii. porrengers of pewter,
iiiiii. platters, ii. saucers, and ii. braspottes vs.

The Larder.

It' one great chest, i. troffe, and two litle barrells, vis.

The Brewhouse.

It' v. tubbes, i. keler, i. olde tubbe, i. olde table,
i. old whele, and one chese pesse xvid.

The Yelyng House.

It' iii. colyng ledes, ii. brassepannes, and vii. oulde
tobbes vs.

The Boultynge House.

It' iii. troffes, i. watering fate, i. boultynge huche,
i. busshell, and ii. tubbes sould for viiid.

The Cheslofte.

It' ii. litell tubbes, ii. chese rakkes, ii. charnes, i. litell
whele, and ii. shelves viiid.

The Kylhouse.

It' i. hercloth and i. lader hengeyng upon the wall
of ye seid house xid.

Grayne.

It' one quart' of whete vis. iid., quart' of munke corne
viiis., i. quart' of ottes xxd., i. quart' of pese iis. viiid.
In all xviiis. iiiid.

Catell.

It' one horse iiiis. sould to the said Thomas iiiis.

Wayne.

It' i. wayne and i. dungcart sould for xvid.

Heye.

It' for x lode of hey xvs.

Plate Sould.

It' sould to George Warren i. chales and iii. sponnys
all whytt weing viii. ounces at iis. iiiid. the ounc'
xxvis. viiid.

Dette receyved.

It' receyved of an old dett due to ye seid late priorye
xxvis. viiid.

The sume totall of all the guddis of thys seid late
priory with xxvis. viiid. for dett receyved and xxvis.
viiid. for plate viiil. vis. id.

Rewardes gyvene to the Abbes and the Convent
ther at ther departure

Fyrst to Isabell Launder xls.

It' to Christabell Smith xxs.

It' to Alice Beche xxs.

It' to Felix Bagghawe xxs.

cs.

Rewardes gyvene to the servantes ther at ther
lyke departure

It to William parker, Chapelan; xxxs. iiiid.

Robert Baker xiiis.

Margarett Burre iis.

Thomas Bolde iiiis.

William Morre iis.

Thomas Smith xs.

Kateryn Alate xiiis. iiiid.

Phillip Duffelde iiiis.

lxxviiis. iid.

It' in cates boughte and spent at the tyme of the commissioners being there for the dissolucon of the seid late piory, and for the saffe kepyng of the guddes and catell there found duryg the seid tyme, lxs.

The sum of the paymentes aforeseid is, xli. xviii. iid. and so remayneth in the seid comissiono's handes xl, for they have payd more then they for the goodes of the seid late piory have received by iiiili. xii. id.

Md. that the Pioresse of the seid late Piory hath receyved of Michaelmas Quarters Rentes dwe to the seid Piory these Parcelles folowing, and none other as . . . sayth.

Fyrst, of Mr Thomas Gyfford for Blythbery for halfe a yere xxxiiis. iiid.

It' of Mr. Thomas Moreton for le felde for half a yere xxvis. viiid.

It' of T . . . Tunkes for the rent of hys ferme for halfe a yere vis. viiid.

It' of John Penford for halfe a yeres rent viiis.

It' of Thomas Pitt for a hole yeres rent iis.

It' of Cristofer Alatts for one quarters rente, vis. viiid.

Summa iiiili. iiis. iiid.

Md. that ther is owing to the seid late Piory of Michaelmas Rente by the confession of the foreseid these parcelles.

Fyrst, of Barnaby Clarke of iii. yeres quiet rent, xviiis.

[Here follow 11 other items.]

Pencions and porcions.

[5 items.]

NOTES AND REFERENCES.

CHAPTER II.

Eyton's *Domesday Studies : Staffordshire* has been valuable. For Trentham, cf *Salt Collections*, vol. xi.

CHAPTER III.

For Stone, cf *Salt Collections* vi., Pt. I. (the Stone Chartulary); for Ronton, *Salt Collections* iv., Pt. I. (the Ronton Chartulary); for S. Thomas, Stafford, *Salt Collections* viii., Pt. I. The dates of all the foundations are given in Dugdale.

The Registers of Bishops Norbury and Stretton have also supplied details, and Eyton has again been useful. The book called *Magnum Registrum Album* (in the Capitular muniments at Lichfield) contains a large number of documents showing how frequently the Pope concerned himself with English affairs.

CHAPTER IV.

The history of Radmore may be traced in *Monasticon*; cf also the Staffordshire Pipe Rolls, 1130, 1155-89, in *Salt Collections*, vol. i. Some details have been found in Gasquet, *Henry III.*, and in Stubbs, *Select Charters*. For Dieulacres, cf *Salt Collections* xi., new series; for Hulton, cf *Salt Collections* xii., new series.

CHAPTER V.

Among many other examples of the various ways in which lands were acquired by the religious houses, the following may be given:—

The following is from the Ronton Chartulary (fol. 26):—"Conventio inter Fratrem Thomam Priorem etc. et Willielmum filium Roberti de Wirleye, scilicet quod predictus Willielmus dedit etc. tres solidos annualis redditus ad luminare sustentandum etc. in conspectu imaginis Beatae Mariae Virginis etc." (cf fol. 27, 57). The Staffs. Assize Roll, 21 Edw. I., records a gift of tenements in Stone and elsewhere to the Priory of Stone in return for a daily mass, etc. (*Salt Collections* vi., Pt. I., 231).

The following are from the Burton Chartulary:—"In Waterfala sunt ii bovatae terrae quas dedit nobis Aschetillus dispensator quietas et solutas ab omni servitio et posuit super altare per unum cultellum, et hoc idem concessit in capitulo Galfridus filius ejus et recepti fuerunt ipsi et uxor ejusdem Aschetilli defuncta in communionem fraternae societatis et matronum et beneficiorum Ecclesiae (fol. 6). "Ipsi vero . . . recepti sunt ab Abbate et a monachis in plenariam Societatem et in plenariam fraternitatem esse participes per omnia

in omnibus bonis et beneficiis et elemosinis et orationibus quaecumque fient in Ecclesia Burtoniae usque in finem seculi et usque in sempiternum (fol. 18). Also the instance mentioned in Chap. VIII. *infra* (p.).

The following is from the Ronton Chartulary, c. 1166 (fol. 9):—"Omnibus filiis Sanctae Matris Ecclesiae etc Rogerus filius Henrici de Halctona salutem. Noscat universitas vestra me concessisse etc Deo et Sanctae Mariae de Essartis etc totam terram cum mansura quam Richardus Wenthel tenet in Halctona etc pro anima Willielmi filii mei qui apud eos religionis habitus suscepit etc."

Burton Chartulary, fol. 69 (in *Journal of Derbyshire Archaeological Society*, p. 130):—"Omnibus etc Walterus filius Willelmi Tinctoris de Esseburne salutem etc. Noverit etc me assensu uxoris meae Yngae et heredum meorum donasse etc totum illud tenementum etc pro hac etc dicti Abbas et conventus dederunt mihi prefatae uxori meae duas marcas argenti in itinere nostro versus terram sanctam etc."

Burton Chartulary, fol. 32:—"Sciant etc ego Richardus filius Roberti de Brontistona et Margareta uxor mea dedimus etc volatum unum quod tenemus in boscho de Litlehay etc et pro hac donatione etc dictus Abbas etc dederunt nobis pre manibus in magna necessitate nostra dimidiam marcam argenti etc."

Ronton Chartulary, fol. 39 (Money raised to redeem lands lost in Barons' War, under the terms of the *Dictum de Kenilworth*, 1266):—"Richardus dominus de Flotesbroc [Flashbrook] confirmavi etc totam terram quam habent de dono Hugonis patris mei in feodo de Ecclushale etc pro hac autem concessione concesserunt mihi dicti canonici quod dies anniversarii mei in eorum martilogio annotabitur quamcito de decesso meo constiterit eisdem et facient servitium pro anima mea et antecessorum meorum die anniversarii mei sicut pro canonico dictae domus in perpetuum, et preterea quadraginta solidos mihi contulerunt ad auxilium redemptionis meae factae Thomae Bosse in guerra tempore Henrici Regis etc."

Nicholas de Tittensor gave an estate to the Priory of Stone, *pro anima patris mei et matris meae*, but his son tried, without success, to recover half of it (Stone Chartulary, fol. 21; Plea Roll, i John—Salt Collections viii., 68, 129).

Plea Rolls, 56 Henry III. (Salt Collections iv.):—"The Abbot of Dieulacres being sued for six years' arrears of an annual rent of 100s. for 200 acres at Chartley pleads that the owner had forfeited his lands through being in arms against the King in the late wars.

For the working of the Mortmain Acts, cf the following:—The Ronton Chartulary (fol. 18) records an Inquisition at Gnosal, II. Edw. I.: "Thomas

quondam Prior de Ronton appropriavit sibi et domui suae sexaginta acras terrae etc de Johanne de Frank-eville quatuor annis elapsis ante publicationem statuti de terris ad manum mortuum non ponendis editi etc.” Of Burton Chartulary, ff. 11, 49, 77; *Calendar of Patent Rolls, Rich. II.*, 1585-89, p. 152, etc.; *L. and P., Henry VIII.*, vol. iv., Pt. iii., Nos. 5,336, 5906 (A.D. 1529).

The following are examples of corrodies :—

Burton Chartulary, fol. 22 :—“ Sciant etc. quod ego Bernardus Abbas etc concessimus Reginaldo de Sto. Albano Monachatum quando inde voluntatem habuerit et ei licuerit et interim unum corredium, panem videlicet et potum cum generalibus sicut unus de monachis habuerit, pro servitio sui corporis prope sive longe cum a nobis ad hoc vocatus fuerit et pro eo quod reddidit nobis totam donationem quam de Abbate Roberto habuit etc. Cum vero contigerit Reginaldum longinus [*sic.*, *i.e.*, longius] ire pro servitio Ecclesiae dabimus ei expensas quae ei et armigero suo et equis sufficiant sed interim aliud corredium donec redeat non habebit etc. Licebit quoque ei si in peregrationem vel in aliud negotium longinus [*sic.*] porrexerit corredium sui cui voluerit concedere quamdiu in laico habitu fuerit. Licebit etiam si alibi religionis habitum assumere sine reclamazione nostra si vero nobiscum jugo religionis se subdere voluerit cum tertia parte bonorum suorum ad nos veniet quando ei placuerit.” (1166.)

Reginald's father, William, who became a monk of Burton, had received an earlier corrody in the following terms from Abbot Geoffrey—1114-1150 (fol. 17) :—“ Concessit etiam ei Abbas procuracionem unius monachi in vita sua et cum obierit vel cum monachus factus fuerit concessit eandem procuracionem uxori suae Albredae, quamdiu et ipsa vivet et equaliter se tenebit, tamen sine hereditate aliqua etc horum omnium esse heredem concesserunt, et Abbas et Monachi, Rainaldum filium ejus post ipsum et non clamet hereditatem in procuracionem monachi.” The following also appears (fol. 8) :—“ Habet Tuoldus carpentarius molendarium pro xxs. quoque anno et pro solidatis suis ut faciat omnia opera Ecclesiae quae pertinerit ad officium suum et de ligno de plumbo. Hoc molendarium debet molere totum wintercorn de curia.”

“ Levingus Aurifaber tenet iiii bovatas et croftam et molendinum pro vi s. iiii. et opertaur opus monasterii sine mercede ad cibum Abbatis dum operatur (Burton Chartulary, fol. 12—*Journal of Derbyshire Archaeological Society*, vol. vii., p. 110).

“ Ego Galfridus Abbas Bertoniae et Monachi mecum concedimus huic Fromundo ligio homini nostro parum terrae in Burtona *ad faciendum domum* etc. et iiii bovates et dimidiam in Wineshille et ii bovates in Horninglawe etc. in procuracionem unius monachi quamdiu vixerit pro servitio corporis sui

et sine hereditate. Haec omnia excepta procuratione cibi [*sic.*] concedimus ei *et heredi ejus* pro viiis. quoque anno, soluta et quieta a consuetudinibus nisi quod prestabit aratrum suum semel in byeme et semel in quadragesima" (Burton Chartulary, fol. 17; cf. also pp. 31 (2), 32, 38, 47, 55).

Dieulacres Chartulary, No. 99 :—"Omnibus ad quos presens scriptum pervenerit Henricus filius Hugonis Judei de Bivele salutem. Noveritis me dedissa etc. Deo et Sancte Marie et monachis de Pulton donationem quam pater meus etc facit et per cartam suam confirmavit de quatuor bovatis terre quas habuit in villa de Bivele etc. Pretere cum messuagio et xx seylionibus quos pater meus de dictis monachis tam in vita sua tenendis acceperat ego et heredes mei nillum jus vendicabimus in perpetuum. Ipsi autem monachi concesserunt in omnibus diebus vite mee victum et vestimentum quamdiu in famulatu illorum fidelis et diligens esse voluero etc."

For a corrody granted as Life Assurance, cf Burton Chartulary, fol. 36 :—"Notum sit etc quod ego Avicia filia Rogeri de Brantistona dedi etc duas bovatas terrae in Brantistona quas Humfridus filius Edwini tenuit cum ipso Humfrido et tota sequela sua et vii acras prati quae jacent citra Salteresford. Reddendo inde annuatim mihi et heredibus meis iis vid etc. Pro hac autem donatione etc dederunt mihi premanibus predicti monachi xxxvis. et concesserunt mihi unoquoque anno ad sustentionem vitae meae quamdiu vixero xvi bussellos siliginis a coquinario suo etc."

The following corrody dates from the middle of the 13th century :—"Pro hac donatione etc dedit mihi Laurentius Abbas et Conventus Burtonensis unum corredium unius liberi servientis quo ad vixero a domo Burtonensi percipiendum in pane cervisia et companagio et duodecim solidos annuos pro indumentis et calciamentis ab Abbate Burtoniae qui pro tempore fuerit tota vita mea percipiendos etc." (fol. 41).

A very detailed and interesting corrody, obtained by a woman and her son, is dated 1295 :—"Omnibus etc. Matildis filia quondam Nicholai de Schobinhale salutem. Noverit etc. me reddidisse pro me et heredibus meis dominis meis Domino Abbati et Conventui de Burtona super Trentham illam ser-jantiam et custodiam portae suae Abbachiae de Burtona simul cum toto corrodio et annuo redditu eisdem pertinente, et omnia tenementa tam infra villam de Burtona quam extra quae michi pervenerunt ex hereditate et successione Walteri de Schobinhale quondam janitoris sui sine aliquo retenemento etc. Pro hac autem redditione etc dederunt et concesserunt michi predicti Abbas et Conventus singulis diebus quamdiu vixero duas michas monachales, duos galones cervisiae Conventualis sive citerae si Con-

ventus citeram bibat, et unum denarium pro companagio. Et pro qualibet septimana septem panes servientium et septem galones cervisiae garcionum. Et singulis annis unum sextarum duri bladi et unum sextarum avenae percipiendos de granario suo de Burtona ad tres anni terminos, videlicet in festo Sancti Martini unum quarterum frumenti et unum quarterum avenae. Et in festo Purificationis Beatae Mariae dimidium quarterum frumenti et dimidium quarterum bladi liberationum (*sic.*) et unum quarterum avenae. Et in festo Paschae unum quarterum bladi liberationum (*sic.*) et unum quarterum avenae. Et singulis annis unam marcā argenti scilicet etc. Et singulis annis sex carectas bosci, unam carectatam feni et unam carectatam foragii ad domum meam pro carectas suas cariendas. Concesserunt etiam Radulfo filio meo honorabilem victum et vestitum de dono sua Burtoniae, ita tamen quod pro decem annos a die confectionis presentum continue subsequentes sustentabitur decenter juxta status sui exigentiam in omnibus vitae suae necessariis. Et post lapsum decem annorum vel infra si eis placuerit serviet in competenti servitio quamdiu sanus et potens fuerit ad laborandum, et tunc percipiet mensam et robam cum vernaculis suis. Et si forte aliquo morbo vel egritudine detentus fuerit quominus possit laborare tunc durante morbo vel egritudine predictis habebit singulis diebus unum panem Abbatis et alium servientium et unum galonem citerae (*sic.*) vel citerae si Conventus citeram bibat et unum ferculum de coquina sua et unam robam cum vernaculis suis per annum sicut supradictum est etc." (fol. 79).

The following is from the Stone Chartulary:—
 "Haec est conventio facta inter Henricum Priorem de Stanes etc et inter Mabilia quondam amicam Alexandri Decani de Stanes scilicet quod idem Canonici inuenient predictae Mabyliae victum et vestitum omnibus diebus vitae suae ad victum suum habebit singulis diebus unum corredium quale habet usus Canonicus in domo de Stanes per assisam in pane et companagio exceptis pitanciis et de cervisia Canonicorum unam mensuram de Kenilworda quae continet unum galonem et quarterem partem unius galonis et singulis mensibus unum bussellum siligini et ad vestitum suum singulis annis vis. argenti ad Festum Sancti Wulfadi percipiendos et habebit illud messuagium cum gardino quietum quod tenuit Richardus capellanus in villa de Stanes etc. Ipsa vera Mabilia ex altera parte quietum clamavit eisdem Canonicis etc. illud messuagium etc quod tenuit quondam predictus Alexandrus Decanus in villa de Stanes etc." (fol. 20).

John the Prior of Stone was fined 30 shillings in 1294 for having wrongfully deprived a man of a corrody he held, viz., a loaf of bread, a gallon of beer, a potagium and a ferculum daily as a Canon, and of

a robe worth one mark yearly, with hay and oats for a horse; with a corrody for a groom, for 3 nights; with four cartloads of wood annually and two candles *de cepo* every night from All Saints to Candlemas (Salt Collections vi., Pt. I., p. 293).

See also Stone Chartulary, 30, 34, 56.

Giles de Erdington obtained (c. 1260) from the Priory of St. Thomas, Stafford, the admittance of a Canon upon his presentation and that of his heirs, to say mass for his family, etc. His name was also to be mentioned in their offices and entered in their Obit List, and the anniversary of his death duly mentioned (Salt Collections viii., p. 183).

For Assarting, of Ronton Chartulary (fol. 52):—"Conventio inter Aluredum Priorem etc ex una parte et Richardum etc ex altera, videlicet quod predicti Prior et Conventus concesserunt predicto Richardo et heredibus suis appropiare se de vasto in feodo de Mulewyz de quadraginta acris etc."

Stone Chartulary (fol. 20):—"Haec est conventio facta inter Dominum Priorem etc et Dominum Ivonem de Waleton ex altera videlicet quod dicti Prior etc permiserunt prefato Ivoni assartare quandam particulam terrae in bosco predicti Ivonis de Waleton. Quae terra est communis pastura Priori et Canonici de Stanes et hominibus eorum de villa de Stanes etc."

Burton Chartulary (fol. 29):—"Omnibus etc N. humilis Dei Gratia Abbas Burtonae etc dedisse etc Willelmo de Gardino et Matildi uxori suae et heredibus suis totam terram illam in Bromle quam Johannes filius Steynulfi ibidem tenuit et duas acras de essarto quas Johannes filius Julianae essartavit sub Chisbembulle et unam acram prati in Redmora et octo acras de essarto etc."

Ibid (fol. 30):—"Universis etc Willielmus de Gardino Lichfeldiae et Matildis filia Julianae uxor ejus salutem. Noverit etc nos remississe etc. Abbati etc totum clamium et jus nostrum si quod habuimus in octo acris terrae de essarto in boscho Abbatis de Bromle etc."

The following licence for enclosure gives many interesting details. Abbot Laurence held office from 1233 to 1260.

Ibid (fol. 33):—"Haec est conventio facta inter Laurentium Abbatem etc. ex una parte et Robertum de Toke militem ex alia parte super contentionibus Clausturae haiarum et pasturae ortus inter eos in Ansedelega, videlicet quod dictus Abbas etc concesserunt dicto Roberto et heredibus suis et hominibus suis de Ansedele ut claudatur longa haia a lata via quae Mereweya dicitur quantum illa longa haia extendit inter boschum Abbatis et campum arabilem de Ansedele versus fontem Raveneti de omni boscho excepta quercu et hus et de quercu capiant palos quantum potest attingi stando in terra de rationabile wige et secuti. Item concesserunt

ut claudantur hayae de curia domini in Ansedele quando necesse fuerit de spinis et de alno et de salice tum ubi proprius et competentius poterit claustrura capi extra hayam Abbatis quae Lithle-haya dicitur et cum necesse fuerit claudi, nunciabitur Domino Abbati vel celerario vel alio ballivo suo sero ut veniat vel mittat mane ad rationabile estoverium suum claustrurae capiatur ut predictum est de claustrura et veniente preterea forestario vel ballivo, ostendatur ei locus captionis et claustrura etc." (Among the witnesses is Sir William Vernon "tunc Justiciario Cestriae," which limits the date between the years 1229-1232.)

Cf also fol. 31 (p. 48), etc.

Ronton Chartulary (fol. 14):—"Robertus filius Roberti, domini de Knitteleye, concessi etc quod transeant etc carectis de Prioratu de Rontone per medium boscum meum usque ad grangias suas absque impedimento mei vel heredum meorum." Also fol. 50:—"Philippus dominus de Burewardesle dedi etc liberum passagium hominibus et equis et carrectis suis transeuntibus vel redeuntibus per terram et villam meam in Eschelega etc" (of also fol. 49).

Jurisdiction.—The following is from the Burton Chartulary (fol. 4):—"Henricus Rex Anglorum R. Episcopo Cestriae et R. Comiti Cestriae et R. de Ferrariis et omnibus Vicecomitibus et ministris etc fidelibus suis Francis et Anglis salutem. Sciatis me dedisse Gaufrido Abbati Abbatiam de Burtona sicut eam melius tenuit aliquis Abbas cum socio et saca et tol et them et infangenthef etc . . . Sciatis quod ego volo et concedo etc quod predictus Abbas de Burton habeat curiam suam plenarie de omnibus rebus et consuetudinibus etc."

Stephen granted "Precipio quod Abbas Burthoniae habeat curiam suam ita bene et in pace sicut Rex Henricus precipet per breve suum neque cogatur exire de curia ad placitandum in aliqua curia dum se ibi recto non defecit."

The following is from the Charter granted by Hugo son of Robert of Okeover, which is referred to in the text:—"Nunquam sequendo curiam meam vel heredum meorum apud Akovere nisi bis per annum per rationabiles summonitiones usque ad proximam curiam post festum Sancti Michaelis et ad proximam curiam post Pascham et quando breve Domini Regis venerit in curia mea ac predictus Henricus vel heredes sui faciant sequela ad curiam meam secundum legem terrae quousque illud breve in curia mea dedicatur."

Instances of Suit of Court appear in the Burton Chartulary, e.g. (fol. 19):—"Data est Felda (i.e., Field) in feufirmam ipsis assentientibus Andreae sicut eam tenuit Ernewius ligius homo eorum, idest pro xxs. quoque anno et pro servitio corporis sui (1116)." This is expressed in the Survey (fol. 6)

thus :—"Hanc terram habet Andreas a firmam pro xxs quoque anno et eum solum judicem invenit ad placita Regis in Staffordscira." Of Wetmore, we read (fol. 18):—"Radulfus . . . debet esse ad placita ejus in Staffordsiria ubicunque Abbas voluerit si fuerit advenienter submonitus nisi forte habeat excusationem necessariam etc sive de infirmitate sive de servitio Domini suo Roberti de Ferrariis cujus ligius homo est." The same tenant held Hampton in Blithfield, and the Survey records (fol. 6) that he holds it "Ita scilicet ut sit ad placita Abbatis in eadem scyra quotienscumque fuerit advenienter submonitus." The holder of Branstone (fol. 9): "Debet ire ad placita et ad Comitatus et ad wapentas, et in exercitus et ubicunque missus fuerit vel cum Abbate vel sine Abbate."

A deed of 1292 gives much information about the customs of the Manor and the View of Frankpledge at the end of the 13th century. "Dictus Robertus dominus de Ansedele pro se et heredibus suis et hominibus suis nativis in eadem et predicti Rogerus, Johannes, Robertus, et Petrus, libere tenentes pro se et heredibus suis omnimodam claustrum in bosco predictorum Abbatis et Conventus amodo capiendam remiserunt etc. Concesserunt et dictus Dominus de Ansedele pro se etc et predicti liberi tenentes pro se etc quod singulis annis veniant et in perpetuum venire teneantur ad duas magnas curias Abbatis de Burton per rationabilem sumonitionem factam, scilicet post festum Paschae et post festum Sancti Michaelis tenendas et ibi presentabunt et respondebunt franciplegii de Ansedele pro dezennis suis omnia quae ad pacem et coronam Domini Regis spectant secundum morem et consuetudinem regni Angliae et americiabuntur non venientes et pacis transgressiones secundum judicium dictae Curiae, salvo dicto domino de Ansedele jure suo petendi curiam suam de tenentibus et hominibus in aliis placitis inter eosdem motis et motiendis in Curia predicta, si ad congruos diem et horam per se vel per alium illam petere paratus est etc," (Burton Chartulary, p. 59).

CHAPTER VI.

This chapter is really a detailed study of the Burton Chartulary and the Surveys it contains. For John de Aslakeby (p. 52) cf *Plea Rolls*, 1 to 15, Edw. III., in *Salt Collections*, xi. For the alternative explanation of Warland mentioned on p. 55, see Ashley i., p. 57, n. 56.

The original "Burton Chartulary" is in the possession of the Marquis of Anglesey, and is a quarto or small folio of 156 leaves of vellum. The original Chartulary is beautifully written in double columns, with red initial letters to the paragraphs, the handwriting being of the 13th and early 14th centuries.

The blank sides of the leaves have been filled with writing of a later date, and additional folios have been interpolated. The Dieulacres Chartulary is in the possession of the Earl of Macclesfield. The Ronton Chartulary is in the British Museum (Cottonian MS., Vespasian, cxv.). The Stone Chartulary is also in the British Museum (Cottonian MS., Vespasian, E., xxiv.).

CHAPTER VII.

For the Pope's frequent demands for money, cf Burton Annals, pp. 265, 276, 300, 302, 303, 314, 354-60, 363, 367, 384, 388, 409, 486; for replies made to them, cf pp. 265, 278, 283, 284, 360. For illustrations of the way King and Pope played into one another's hands, cf pp. 275, 323, 325, 336, 390. The phrase *communitas bacheleriae Angliae* occurs on p. 471, and *populus major et minus*, on p. 360.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Registers of Bishops Norbury and Stretton have again supplied many details; cf also the "List of Capitular Muniments at Lichfield," in *Salt Collections*, vi., pt. ii., and *Hist. MSS. Comm.*, 14th Report, App. viii. The extracts from the Plea Rolls printed in *Salt Collections* (Henry III., in vol. iv., pt. i., 1272-94, in vol. vi., pt. i., 1294-1307, in vol. vii., pt. i.; Edward III., in vols. xi. and xii., pt. i., and xiii.; Richard II., in vols. xiii. and xv.; Henry IV., in vol. xv.; Henry V., and Henry VI., in vols. xvii., iii. n.s., iv. n.s.; Edward IV., in vol. iv. n.s.; Edward IV., Edward V., and Richard III., in vol. vi. n.s.) have supplied many details in this and the following chapters, as have also the extracts from the Pipe Rolls of Richard I. and John, in vol. ii., pt. i.; from the Hundred Rolls of Henry III. and Edward I., in vol. v., pt. i.; from the Pleas of the Forest (Henry III. and Edward I.), in vol. v., pt. i.; Staffordshire Pleas from British Museum, Additional MS., No. 12,269, in vol. vi., pt. i.; from the Assize Rolls and De Banco Rolls (1307-1327) and from the Fine Rolls (1307-1327), in vol. ix., pt. i.; Coram Rege Rolls and Pleas of the Crown (1307-1327), in vol. x., pt. i.; Coram Rege Rolls (Edward III. and Richard II.), in vol. xiv., pt. i.; from the Early Chancery Proceedings (Richard II. to Henry VIII.), in vol. vii., n.s.

Some facts have been found in the *Calendar of Papal Registers*: Papal Letters, vol. iv., and in the Burton Annals. The several Chartularies give various documents which are quoted or mentioned.

CHAPTER IX.

Much of the same material as is mentioned in regard to Chapter VIII. has been found useful in writing this chapter. The point about the wool trade with Flanders and Florence is mentioned by Cunningham, and the table of supplies on page 82 is given in the *Diocesan History of Lichfield*. The depositions of the Burton Monks (p. 84) are given in the Burton Chartulary, fol. 113, and the detail about Prior Dulverne in *Salt Collections*, xii., n.s.

CHAPTER X.

See References mentioned for Chapters VIII. and IX. For the Preceptory at Keele, see *Salt Collections*, xii., n.s. For details about Lapley and Prior Spynale, see *Calendar of Close Rolls*, Edward III., 1354-60. Sir John Fitzherbert's will is given in the *Journal of the Derbyshire Archaeological Society*, vol. vii.

CHAPTER XI.

The principal materials for Wolsey's suppressions are found in the Calendars of State Papers, *Letters and Papers of the reign of Henry VIII.*, vols. i., iv., pt. i., pt. ii., pt. iii. For Wolsey's visitation of Lichfield Cathedral, see *Capitular Muniments, Liber primus Miscellaneorum*, fol. 26, and *Act Books*, vol. iv. The Staffordshire Commissioners (p. 103) were Sir John Gifford, Sir Edward Aston, Edward Lyttleton, and John Vernon.

CHAPTER XII.

The principal materials are again found in *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII.*—vols. iv., pt. iii.; v, vi., xi., xii., pt. i.; xiii., pt. ii., and in the

Proceedings of the Privy Council (1837), vol. vii. Strete's letter on p. 105 is given in Wright's *Original Letters* (but the date there assigned to it must be wrong). Cromwell's letter (p. 107) is given in Merri-man i., 354.

For Longford, in Elizabeth's reign, see Pedes Finium, abstracts from originals in P.R.O., in *Salt Collections*, vol. xiii., and for the lists of Recusants, see Calendars of State Papers, Domestic, James I., 1603-10 (p. 407), and *Salt Collections*, v., n.s. (p. 188).

CHAPTER XIII.

The main guide to the materials for the general suppression is the series of *Letters and Papers of the reign of Henry VIII.*, which have been worked through

with care. Strete's appointment as receiver is given in Merriman, i., 339, and the letter from which the paragraph on p. 113 is taken is given in Wright's *Letters*, p. 128. The letter written in Elizabeth's reign (p. 114) is from the same collection, p. 114. The Abbot of Forde's commission is given in the Appendix, from the original in P.R.O. The following letter from the Abbot of Burton to Holcroft, from the P.R.O., is interesting :—

(P.R.O.) *State Papers, Dom. Hen. VIII., Vol. 120,*
No. 143.

Mayster Holcroft I enterly recomend me vnto you beseching God that I may once be able to surrendre vnto you condygne thanks for thys youre goodness wyche have dymynysshed parte of the charges wyche by yor (scored through) comyssyon you myght have put me to, And as touchyng youre request of this brother and the lame chylde, god wylling I shall so accomplysshe hyt as shall both please yor mastership & content the parties beyng not only in this thyng but also in all other redy at my prynces comandement and to my small power shew yor mastershippe pleasure prying you accordyng to yor w'tyng of good word and lawfull favor Thus oure lorde have yor mastershippe in his keypyng to his pleasure and youre comfort from Burton the xviith day of Maye

Yors assuryd

Willm Abbot there

[Addressed] to the Ryght Worshipful Maister holcroft the Kynge comycyoner at Lenton delyvr this

The directions to the visitors (p. 116) are printed in Burnet, iv., 74. The letters of Layton and Legh (p. 117) are in Wright's *Letters*, 93, 95. For the *Compendium Compertorum* (p. 117) see L. and P., Henry VIII., x., 364. Cromwell's letter to the Bishops (p. 117) is given in Strype, i., App. 216. The Instructions for Commissioners (p. 120) are given in Burnet, iv., 89. The names of some of the local men concerned in the Dissolutions are given in the following document :—

Exchequer Augmentation Office. Miscellaneous Books.
Vol. 172.

Names of all & every suche person & persons as was by Thomas Ligh doctor in the lawe and William Cavendyshe, auditor commissioners appoynted by the King our soveraigne lorde for the dissolution of these monasteryes folowing by them Indiferently chosyn and sworne of and for the valuyng & ratyng & appraisynge of all & singler the gooddes & catelles cummyng & beyng found at the surrenders taken in the same late dyssolvdyd monasteryes & priories within

sundry shires or counties the names as well of the
seyd howses as of the persons so sworne folowing
her under wryghten in order That ys to say

Brewode :—	John Broune	}	jurati
	William Barnes		
	Henry Holte		
	Thomas Willes		
	Rychard Vohyt		
	John Baker		
	William Turner		
	William Atwill		
	John Shyrborne		
	Thomas Clarke		
	Anthony Palmer		
	George Wilkyns		

Seint Thomas besyde Stafford	Raffe Mynors	}	jurati
	John Langley		
	Roger Alayn		
	George Bowgley		
	John Hyll		
	John Lyenshall		
	William Whitell		
	Roger Gratwych		
	Nycholas Bagshaw		
	Rychard Rawson		
	John Fyssher		
	William Blythe		

Delacres	William Butler	}	jurati
	Thomas Johnson		
	Henry Atkyns		
	John Flynte		
	John Arden		
	Hugh Latham		
	Ryc. Luther		
	John Thomson		
	Henry Barber		
	Thomas Jacson		
	William Tanner		
	Thomas Morris		

For the action of the Abbot of Dieulacres (p. 123),
of Sleigh's *Leek*, p. 224:

"Cole's MS., 26-246, contains the Deposition of
John Whitney, late Chamberleyne to the last Abbot
of Dieulacresse, taken 8 Jany., 7° Elizh. Hereby it
appeared that 4 or 5 days after the suppression of
that Abbey, several Blanks, having the Covent-
sealle, were seene by the Deponent, the Abbat and
others being privy. Upon these blanks Wm.
Dampport, the Abbot's Scribe, wrote *Leases*, with
Ante-Dates: and among the rest, one was the Lease
and Reversion of the Mannour of Poultone.

"Mem. of the Deedes and Wrytinges cancelled by Edmund Hopwood, esq., John Manley, gent., and Hy. Manley his sonne, 13 Nov., 24^o Eliz., before Sir Gilbert Gerard, Knight, mr. of the Rolles, and Thos. Egerton, esq., Sollicitour-genl. (both whose hands are to this paper), for that the same appeared to be suspicious, and indirectly contrived to gyve Credit unto a pretended Lease in Reversion of the mr. of Pultone, and certen other Landes, which was supposed to have beene made by the Indenture of Thos. Whitney, late Abbot of Delacresse, for terme of 61 yrs., and to begynne after the ende of a former Lease thereof made. Which Lease in Reversion seming to have been forged & counterfetted, was heretofore cancelled and defaced by the order and Awarde of Sir Ths. Bromley, knt., Ld Chancellour of England, then Solicytour Genl., and the said Sir Gilbert Gerarde, knt., then Attorney-genl."

The Licence to Continue granted to Croxden, and also the Deed of Surrender of Croxden, are printed in full in the Appendix from the originals. The following are the names of the inmates of some of the other houses :—

SURRENDER OF TUTBURY PRIORY.

Public Record Office. Deeds of Surrender of Abbeys, &c.

Exchequer Augmentation Office, No. 247.

Prioratus beate Marie de Tudbery in Com. Staff. Lich. et Cov. dioc., ordinis sancti Benedicti. 14 Sept., 1538.

Arthur Meverell otherwise Throwley, prior.

Signatures :—

p me Arthuru piorem de Tuttbury
p me Thoma Norton
p me Thoma Smith
p me Thoma Shele
p me Robtum Stafford
p me Nycholas Broly
p me Rogeru Hylton
p me Thoma Renez
p Richardum Arnold.

[With regard to the name of the prior, it may be noticed that in 1607 the tithes which had belonged to Rocester Abbey were conveyed to Robert Meverell, of Throwley, Esq., whose only daughter married Thomas Lord Cromwell.]

EXCHEQUER AUGMENTATION OFFICE. DEEDS OF SURRENDER, No. 206.

ROUCESTER OR ROCETTUR ABBEY, AUSTIN CANONS.

The wording of this Surrender is (mutatis mutandis) practically identical with that of No. 66 (Crokesden).

"Williamus Grafton abbas monasterii siue Abbathie beate marie virginis de Rosceter in Com' Staffs. Coven' et Lich' dioc' ordinis Sancti Augustini," &c.

dated 16 September, 1538.

[Signatures]

per me Wylliamum Grafton
 „ Georgium Dave
 „ Johannem Snape
 „ Ricardum Heith
 „ Johannem Brykylbake
 „ Radulphum Corke
 „ Williamum Bond
 „ Georgium Graftu
 „ Johannem Dayne

[The seal is broken at the base, but otherwise is in good condition.]

[Signatures to witnesses of delivery of the deed]

Mr. [magister] Williamus Bassett, miles
 Thomas Fizharberd, armiger
 William Bassett, armiger
 Johannes Fizharberd, generosus.

[Enrolled on the dorse of Close Roll of the same month and year.]

SURRENDER OF THE PRIORY OF ST. THOMAS, STAFFORD,
 AUSTIN CANONS.

*Public Record Office. Deeds of Surrender of Abbeyes,
 &c.*

Exchequer Augmentation Office, No. 220.

Prioratus sancti Thome Martiris juxta Stafford,
 ordinis sancti Augustini, Coven. et Lich. dioc. 17
 October, 30 Hen. VIII.

Signatures :—

p me Ricardum Whittell, piorem
 p me Ricardum Harve
 p me Thoma Baguley
 p me Willm pipstoke
 p me Guilihelmu Stapleton
 + p me Christtoferu Symson

Cromwell's Injunctions (p. 125) are given in Burnet, iv., 101. Bassett's Letter (p. 126) occurs in Wright's *Letters*, p. 143. Ingworth's letter from Lichfield (p. 127) is given by Wright, p. 204. Bishop Lee's Injunctions to his diocese are printed in Burnet, iv., 490, and Bishop Shaxton's in iv., 492. The details of the sales (p. 133-5) are printed in Wright (pp. 267-278). For Ingworth's solicitude for Bothe, cf Wright, pp. 278, 206. For the Rocester Bells, cf Public Record Office, Ministers' Accounts, Divers Counties, No. 230, Bundle 61 (Accounts of John Scudamore, membrane 6) :—"Nuper Monasterii de Roucester—de precio trium campanorum nuper Monasterii de Roucester remanentium in Campanilia Ecclesiae parochialis ibidem non de eo quod parochiani de Roucester predicta Clamant easdem campanas sibi

et parochianis ibidem pertinere et remanere super clamentium suum quousque determinantur coram Cancellario et Consilio Curiae Augmentationis etc. Si dictum clamentium verum sit necne quia easdem campanas occupabuntur et usi fuerunt tam per nuper Religiosos quam eciam per parochianos de Rocester predicta pulsandas ad divina servicia et aliter. Summa nulla."

The letter to Scudamore (p. 136) is given by Wright, p. 291.

Bazin's novel, translated into English under the title of *The Nun*, describes the suppression of a French nunnery in recent years and the after-history of the sisters. Sir Simon Degge's remarks are taken from Spelman, 167, cf also 216 and App. ii. For Scudamore's description of the local gentry, cf Wright, p. 243.

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